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ABSTRACT

These newsletters on Institutional Effectiveness (IE) at Austin Community College (ACC) in Texas include the following articles: (1) "The 'Fast Track'...Students Say It Works!" (2) "Are Students Successfully Completing Distance Learning Courses at ACC?" (3) "Tracking Transfers"; (4) "Math Pilot: Study Skills Attached Labs"; (5) "Assessment...because Learning Matters Most"; (6) "Institutional Level Conversations about Student Learning"; (7) "Employee Satisfaction with Services of Highly Used College-Wide Offices"; (8) "Using Rubrics To Assess Effectiveness"; (9) "ULEAD--Assessing the Effectiveness of Effectiveness Assessment"; (10) "Workforce Graduates Detail"; (11) "Assessing General Education Outcomes"; (12) "Program Review and Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment: Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Technology (HART)"; (13) "ACC Student Engagement...Educational Bliss?" and (14) "Transfer Outcomes: Start Here...Get There and Succeed." (AA)

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ACC Effectiveness Review, 1999-2002

Roslyn Wallace, Editor

Volumes 5-8

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ACC EFFECTIVENESS

Review

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL.5 / ISSUE 1 / JANUARY 1999

The "*Fast Track*"...Students Say It Works!

Many community colleges around the country have begun to offer courses in non-traditional instructional formats in response to their community's call for increased access to educational opportunities. In the fall of 1998, ACC offered courses in an eight-week semester format in twenty-four disciplines, from art to welding, and including history, government, foreign language, English, math, computer science, and developmental studies. The coursework of these classes was "accelerated." Class meetings were altered so students could earn the same number of credit hours as in a 16-week semester course.

Students in eight week semester classes were surveyed to provide faculty and administrators information to insure continued quality educational experiences for students.

This article presents a summary of student "feedback" from that survey. The complete *Eight Week Semester Course Survey Report* is available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and on the ACCweb at the following address:

http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/oie.

Who enrolled in the 8-week semester courses?

Why did they enroll in this course format?

What were their expectations and experiences of the 8-week course?

How did they do?

METHODOLOGY

Survey Administration: Two questionnaires were designed to collect student feedback data on 8-week semester courses, a *Before 8-week Course Feedback* questionnaire to be completed during the first week of the class and an *After 8-week Course Feedback* questionnaire to be completed during the last week of the class. Faculty distributed questionnaires to their students to complete during class time and returned the completed questionnaires to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for analysis.

Instrument: Each questionnaire consisted of a set of 14 "reasons" students might select for taking the 8-week course, a set of demographic data items, and a set of statements describing students' "expectations" (*Before 8-week* questionnaire) or "experience" (*After 8-week* questionnaire) of the course, with which students indicated their level of agreement (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree).

Survey Population: The survey population consisted of 39 (49.4 percent) of the 79 course sections offered in the first 8-week term of Fall 1998. At least one section of each course, every campus where an 8-week course was taught, every meeting time (morning, middle of the day, and evening), and every meeting format (twice/week, four times/week, once/week, three times/week, five times/week, Saturdays, and week days) were represented in the 39 sections selected.

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RESULTS

Twenty-two of the 39 selected sections returned both the *Before* and *After 8-Week Course Feedback* questionnaires, an overall return rate of 56.4 percent. The return rate for *Before* questionnaires *only* was 61.5 percent (24 of 39 sections, 416 students). The return rate for *After* questionnaires *only* was 91.7 percent (22 of the 24 sections, 272 students). *After* questionnaires were sent only to those sections that had completed the *Before 8-Week Course Feedback* questionnaire. Analysis of the *Before* and *After* questionnaires revealed significant similarity of response on both questionnaires. Thus, in the report that follows, percentages are given for responses by students who *completed* the 8-week course, except in the case of questions relating to student's *expectations* where percentages are given for responses by students who completed the *Before* questionniare.

Who enrolled in the 8-week courses?

Based on the responses to both the *Before* and *After* questionnaires, the greatest percentage of the students who enrolled in an 8-week semester course in Fall 1998

- Were between the ages of 17 - 21 years old (43.0%)
- Had earned 36 or more credit hours to date from ACC and any other college (34.6%)
- Attended classes at ACC primarily in the daytime (67.8%)
- Were employed part or full time (43.0%)
- Were enrolled in 12 - 14 credit hours in Fall 1998, including the 8-week semester course (30%)
- And were NOT concurrently attending another college (89.9%).

Why did they enroll in this course format?

A majority of students cited the following reasons for taking a class in the 8-week semester format (listed in descending order of number and percent of students selecting that reason):

- I can take more courses in a single semester (one in the first 8-weeks, another in the next 8-weeks). (N= 189, 69.5%)
- I can complete a two course sequence in one semester (i.e., ENG 1613 the first 8-weeks, ENG 1623 the second). (N=166, 61.0%)
- The 8-week course fits into my life/work schedule better than long semester courses do. (N= 165, 60.7%)

Other of the top ten reasons for taking a class in the 8-week semester included the following :

- I prefer the accelerated pace of the 8-week course. (N=134, 49.3%)
- I can take a course that I am not really interested in, but that is required for my degree, and "get it over" quickly. (N= 113, 41.5%)
- I tend to "lose steam" as a semester progresses. Knowing the class ends in 8 weeks takes the pressure off. (N=98, 36.0%)
- I learn better when I can focus on fewer courses at a time. (N= 92, 33.8%)
- I can start a course in the middle of the semester. (N= 92, 33.8%)
- I can meet the requirements for developmental courses sooner. (N= 87, 32.0%)
- I am likely to procrastinate if assignments are spaced at time intervals that are too wide. (N=87, 32.0%)

Expectations...

The majority of students who completed the *Before 8-week Course* questionnaire expected the workload would be modified (85.8%), but not "watered down." (73.8%) They expected to learn as much (88.7%) and spend as much time in preparation (79.5%) for the 8-week course as for 16-week courses. They expected (80.8%), and were willing (85.8%), to work twice as hard in the 8-week course as in a 16-week course.

Most intended to take another course in the second 8-week semester (79.3%) and wanted ACC to offer more 8-week courses (88.3%).

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...and Experience

The 8-week courses met students' expectations expressed on the *Before 8-week* questionnaire. The majority of students completing the *After 8-week* questionnaire indicated the workload and course content were manageable (83.8%), but not "watered down" (85.3%); they learned as much in the 8-week course (73.1%) and would not have made a higher grade in the 16-week version of the same course (59.6%). Students reported they spent as much time in preparation for the 8-week course as they would have in a 16-week course (67.3%). Preparation for the 8-week course took more time than they had expected it would (58.5%). They worked twice as hard in the 8-week course (66.9%) and felt it was worth it to complete courses, or their degree, earlier than in a 16-week semester (82.4%).

The majority of students completing the *After 8-week* questionnaire (the students who completed the 8-week course) intended to take another course in the second 8-week semester (69.9%), or future 8-week semesters (58.9%), and they would recommend 8-week courses to other students (89.7%). They wanted ACC to offer more 8-week courses (90.1%).

The *After* questionnaire requested that students list three advantages and three disadvantages of the format. Predominate "advantage" themes in these comments were about the accelerated pace of the class, no time to become bored, focus of the short time compared to the "long" semester, completing degree requirements quickly. Predominate "disadvantage" themes in these comments were about the amount of work involved, the time required to keep up with the workload, and the danger of falling behind—there is no catch up time available. Also mentioned were the compressed exam schedule (less time between exams), the accelerated pace of the course, and concern whether learning would be retained. Some students did not like having to spend long hours in class with the same people. Some felt the 8-week course took time from their 16-week course preparation.

How did the students do in the 8-week courses?

Students in the 8-week semester courses did very well. The grade distribution for 338 of the 416 students participating in the feedback survey (two sections did not have grades when the data were run) were as follows:

Grade Distribution for Fall 1998 8-Week Courses

Grade	N	%
A	109	32.2%
B	99	29.3%
C	46	13.6%
D	7	2.1%
F	19	5.6%
W	46	13.6%
I	11	3.3%
AU	2	0.6%

In the sections from which completed surveys were received, 254 of 338 students (75.1%) made a grade of A, B, or C. Students taking the 8-week semester courses persist in these courses at a much greater rate than in some other course formats. Compared to withdrawal rates for other course formats, the withdrawal rate for the 8-week semester courses (13.6 %) was **below** the college-wide average withdrawal rate of 20.5 percent.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate 8-week format courses meet students' needs and the majority of students who take them do well. The majority of students completing 8-week semester courses say they will take another course in this format—either in the next 8-weeks or at another time. They ask that more of the 8-week courses be offered.

—Roslyn Wallace
Institutional Studies Specialist
OIE

The complete study report is available at
http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/oie

Effectiveness Review

The President's Effectiveness council (PEC) is an advisory body, one of whose functions is to discuss and analyze data and information relevant to institutional effectiveness and to refer the results of these discussions to other councils, committees, and task forces for their attention and action, to promote improvement of institutional quality. At its November, 1998 meeting, PEC reviewed a study, "Course Completions Analysis of Distance Learning Courses." Ron Brey, AVP Open Campus, reported Open Campus (OPC) goals and strategies for increasing student success in those courses. The first article that follows is a summary of the study. The second article is OPC's improvement plan.

The complete study is available from the OIE or online at http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/oie.

Are Students Successfully Completing Distance Learning Courses at ACC?

One of the primary functions of a community college is to ensure the successful completion of coursework by its students. Originally, a study was undertaken by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to compare rates of completion and passing grades for credit courses at ACC. This study is a supplement to that analysis and shows completion and passing grades for Distance Learning (OPC) courses at ACC. Six types of OPC exist at ACC:

- Telecourses (ITV) using recorded video programs
- Live televised classes (LTV) originating at the Pinnacle Campus in Southwest Austin
- Email and Internet courses (PC-Based)
- Print-Based courses that are textbook-based
- Directed study courses
- VTEL courses, consisting of the Vocational Nursing program with Fredericksburg

Analysis was done both by OPC type and in comparison to classroom-based counterparts to establish the relative success rates of the OPC program at ACC.

Methodology

Data analyzed was from the Fall 1997 semester. Course D-F rates were defined as a ratio of grades of D or F over all possible grades of A, B, C, D, F, or W. Course withdrawal rates were defined as a ratio of grades of W over all possible grades. The sum of the D-F rate and the withdrawal rate is the D-F-W rate. This rate implies failure to successfully complete the course. Student grades are counted once for each course taken.

Analysis was conducted on OPC type, department, course, and student demographics. These were compared to the OPC average rates of D-F grades and withdrawal. Only those departments with enrollments of more than 100 students were included. Rates for OPC departments and courses were also compared to their classroom counterparts.

Additional analysis was conducted on 120 student subpopulations that were created using age, ethnicity, and gender, and these subpopulations were compared to the averages for OPC and also to classroom averages. Any subpopulation with a D-F grade rate or withdrawal rate more than ten percentage points above the OPC average was considered noteworthy. Only those subpopulations with enrollments of greater than 20 students were considered because with lower enrollments, only a few D-F grades or withdrawals could skew the total percentage.

Results

For OPC, the average D-F grade rate was 14.7% and the average rate of withdrawal was 32.9%, for a total D-F-W rate of 47.6%. This was substantially higher than the rates for classroom-based learning, where the average D-F grade rate was 9.0% and the average rate of withdrawal was 20.5%, for a total D-F-W rate of 29.5%.

The OPC departments shown in Table 1 had D-F-W rates above the OPC average of 47.6%. Of these departments, Accounting, English, and

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Table 1
OPC Departments with D-F-W Rates Above OPC Average

Department	OPC Type	OPC Enrollment	OPC D-F-W Rate	Classroom D-F-W Rate
Accounting	ITV	116	72.4%	30.5%
Anthropology	ITV, Print-Based	127	57.5%	20.9%
Sociology	ITV, Print-Based, Direct	254	55.1%	28.6%
English	ITV, PC-Based	307	52.4%	34.2%
Philosophy	ITV	108	51.9%	32.1%
Government	ITV, Print-Based	472	50.4%	27.1%
Average			**47.6%**	**29.5%**

Philosophy had above average D-F-W rates for both classroom-based learning and OPC environments.

Table 2 shows the OPC departments with withdrawal rates above the OPC average of 32.9%. Of these departments, Accounting, English, and Economics had above average rates of withdrawal for both classroom-based learning and OPC environments.

Table 2
OPC Departments with Withdrawal Rate Above OPC Average

Department	OPC Type	OPC Enrollment	OPC W Rate	Classroom W Rate
Accounting	ITV	116	52.6%	21.1%
Philosophy	ITV	108	44.4%	19.3%
English	ITV, PC-Based	307	40.7%	25.9%
Sociology	ITV, Print-Based, Direct	254	39.0%	19.2%
Psychology	ITV, Print-Based	264	36.0%	16.4%
Economics	ITV	192	35.9%	23.0%
Allied Health Sciences	LTV, Print-Based	113	33.6%	15.2%
Computer Info. Systems	PC-Based	328	33.2%	20.2%
Anthropology	ITV, Print-Based	127	33.1%	14.3%
Average			**32.9%**	**20.5%**

Next, OPC departments were compared to their classroom-based counterparts. The D-F-W rate by department was greater for OPC than for classroom-based learning in all departments except Physical Science and Vocational Nursing. Additionally, the percent of enrolled students withdrawing in a department was greater for OPC than for classroom-based learning in all departments except Biology, Physical Science, and Vocational Nursing.

OPC types were compared to establish which OPC types contributed the largest number of D-F grades and withdrawals. These numbers were closely correlated with percent of enrollment; however, ITV learning contained slightly more than its share of all three categories. ITV had 57% of the total OPC enrollments, but 62% of the total OPC withdrawals, D-F grades, and D-F-W.

Men, Blacks, Hispanics, and all age groups between 18 and 24 had above average rates in all three areas analyzed: withdrawal, D-F grades, and D-F-W. This was no different than classroom-based learning, where Men, Blacks, and Hispanics were above average in all three categories as well.

The following student subpopulations had D-F-W rates more than ten percentage points above average:

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Black Females age 20-21	82.1%
Hispanic Males age 20-21	75.0%
White Males age 20-21	64.5%
Hispanic Females age 20-21	64.3%
White Males age 18-19	62.1%
Asian Females age 25-29	59.1%
Asian Males age 20-21	59.1%
White Males age 22-24	59.1%

Black Females age 20-21 appeared in all three sections (withdrawals, D-F grades and D-F-W). Black Females age 20-21 appeared in two of the three sections for classroom-based learning as well.

Conclusion

- Almost half of all OPC enrollments ended in grades of D or F or in withdrawal, substantially higher than the rates for classroom-based learning.
- Men, Hispanics, Blacks, and younger students (those under 25 years of age) had greater difficulty than did the average student at succeeding in OPC courses. However, these same groups also had greater difficulty than average at succeeding in traditional classroom courses.

While this study shows a greater overall probability of succeeding in a classroom-based course than in OPC, student responses to OPC were not considered. Students may appreciate the convenience and other advantages of OPC enough to outweigh the higher than normal D-F-W rate involved with these courses. OPC is certainly a part of the future in higher education. Having specific knowledge about its positive and negative outcomes at ACC will help us to best utilize OPC as an instructional technique.

—Vicki Reid
Intern
OIE

Distance Learning... Increasing Course Completions

OPC Course Completions Goals

- **Goal 2000: Reduce the difference between the average D-F-W rate for on-campus and distance education students from 18.1 percent to 10 percent.**

- **Goal 2003: Reduce the difference between the average D-F-W rate for on-campus and distance education students from 18.1 percent to no more than 8 percent.**

Data presented in the OIE study of OPC course completions support the historical nationwide trends in OPC courses.

- Successful completion rates are significantly lower than the on-campus equivalent with most of the difference being explained in withdrawal rates. A goal held by some community colleges is to have the difference [between OPC courses and classroom based course completion rate] no greater than 10 percent.
- There is a direct correlation between the age of the distant learning student and the probability of success.
- There are significant variations among courses and, sometimes, sections of the same course. Variations are sometimes explainable by differences in course syllabi, but often there is no explanation.

Over the past 20 years, ACC has collected and analyzed data on the success rates of students in its OPC program. These data support those in the study and lead to additional conclusions:

- Motivation and time management skills are the most important personal skills for success in a distance education course; thus the correlation of success with age.
- Summer success rates in distance education courses are significantly higher due to the differences in the background of the average student.

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Summer students tend to be successfully attending another college or university, are highly motivated and have better skills.

- Evaluation of reported reasons for withdrawing indicate that the large majority are non-college related; e.g., college conflicts with work, enrolled in too many courses, and family commitments.
- Students who succeed in distance education courses rate them positively.

Actions to Reduce D-F-W Grades for Open Campus Students

Intervention strategies to improve student completion rates can occur in three general time periods. Each period has a different set of objectives and strategies.

1. Before Enrolling

These strategies will be instituted for the Fall 1999 semester.

- Have the student complete an on-line student assessment that will be a high predictor of their success in the course. The student will receive positive feedback on his/her strengths and recommendations to address weaknesses.
- Revise the Open Campus information in the *Course Schedule* to improve student understanding of what it takes to succeed in a distance education course.
- Provide better information to faculty, counselors, and staff about Open Campus courses.
- Produce a video program on Open Campus, the types of courses offered and what it takes to succeed in a distance education course. This will be aired on ACC's cable television channel.
- Post the syllabus for each Open Campus course on the OPC web site so that students will make better informed decisions before enrolling.

2. After Enrolling and Before Classes Start

This is an important time period when students should receive accurate information about their course orientation, instructional materials and activities. Also, if students decide that they may not have made a good decision, it is still possible to change to an on-campus class.

- Mail to each student registered for an Open Campus course a customized letter within several days of their enrolling. This letter will contain information about the course and general information on how to succeed in a distance education course. If the student feels they made an inappropriate decision to take an OPC course, there is time to drop the course and add an on-campus course.
- Offer a workshop on basic skills in succeeding in distance education courses.

3. During the Semester

Some courses and students would benefit from more periodic contact between faculty and Open Campus during the session. This would help to pace students through the session and provide better feedback on their progress.

- Set a minimum standard for the number of contacts between a faculty member and students.
- Provide computerized academic testing which will give students immediate detailed feedback when they take an exam at the testing center.
- Review each course syllabus for clarity, consistency with departmental guidelines, the effectiveness of instructional materials and course activities.

—Ron Brey
AVP
OPC

Q&A

Q: I know departments are designing assessment plans for determining whether their program goals are being met, but what about collegewide goals like access, transfer, retention and workforce preparation? How do we know whether these "missions" of the College are being achieved?

A: As with program goals, collegewide goals must be assessed for the College to determine whether its "missions" are being achieved. The steps involved in designing assessment plans for collegewide goals are the same, however, as for program goals:

1. decide the specific outcomes to be achieved
2. generate and clarify questions that must be answered to demonstrate achievement of these outcomes
3. define acceptable levels of outcomes achievement (standards)
4. identify and gather data necessary to answer outcomes achievement questions
5. propose improvement actions

Q: Who is responsible for designing collegewide assessment plans?

A: Unlike program-specific goals, collegewide goals (missions) involve all disciplines and units of the College. Thus, designing assessment plans for collegewide goals is the responsibility of a collegewide group. At ACC, this group is the President's Effectiveness Council (PEC, see p. 4).

PEC is composed of faculty, deans, AVPs, provosts, and administrators, each contributing area-specific expertise to improve effectiveness (outcomes achievement) of the College's missions.

Q: Where is PEC in this process?

A: In Spring 1997, when the PEC was created, it began to address effectiveness of the transfer mission. Over a period of several meetings, the Council suggested, discussed, and refined questions that must be answered to determine whether ACC is achieving its transfer mission. The Council agreed on standards for defining "achievement" of the mission and identified data to be used. By Fall 1997, the assessment plan for transfer was completed.

The same process was used during academic year 1997-1998 to design assessment plans for student access, student retention and workforce preparation.

Assessment is an ongoing process, continually refining outcomes questions and identifying data to answer those questions. This academic year, PEC is examining data for each mission and proposing refinements to the assessment plans where needed.

The *Effectiveness Update* reports the status of each mission. Beginning this month, it will be posted on the OIE web site

(http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/oie),

as well as distributed via intercampus mail. Watch for it in your mailbox.

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ACC EFFECTIVENESS

Review

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL.6 / ISSUE 1 / FALL 1999

Tracking Transfers

In April, 1995, the Texas Association of Junior and Community College Instructional Administrators (TAJCCIA) recommended Texas community colleges, "collect and maintain data to identify specific problems and improve results of student transfer from two-year to four-year colleges." (*Transfer Success Work Group Report, April, 1995.)*

In response to that recommendation, the President's Effectiveness Council (PEC) examined data to answer the following questions relevant to ACC's transfer function:

- *At what rate do ACC students transfer to senior institutions?*
- *To which senior institutions do they go?*

This article presents a condensed version of the PEC report. The complete report is available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness or on the OIE web site.

At what rate do ACC students transfer to universities?

The THECB *Transfer Effectiveness Report* provides transfer data for cohorts of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students who enrolled in summer or fall of a given year, attended at least two semesters, and earned at least 15 semester credit hours (SCH). Four years following the first enrollment of the cohort, a transfer rate is calculated by the THECB that compares the number of students in the cohort who are enrolled in a Texas public senior institution to the number of students in the cohort who are no longer enrolled in the community college. Cohort students still enrolled in a two-year institution at the time of the measure are removed from calculation of the transfer rate.

This rate answers the question, "What percent of students who began their college education at a community college and are no longer enrolled in that community college, have continued their education at a senior institution within four years of their first community college enrollment?" This rate is the one commonly referred to when speaking of a community college's "transfer rate." Table 1 displays ACC and statewide FTIC transfer rate data from the *Transfer Effectiveness Report* for four FTIC cohort years, 1990-1993.

Cohort Year	FTIC Students	Students with at least 15 SCH in 2 Semesters	Students Not Still Enrolled	Transfer Students	Transfer Rate
ACC 1993	3,787	2,541	1,649	495	30.0%
State 1993	82,752	56,904	39,640	10,474	26.9%
ACC 1992	3,852	2,592	1,645	446	27.1%
State 1992	83,277	57,552	13,358	10.308	26.0%
ACC 1991	3,723	2,506	1,650	528	32.0%
State 1991	82,076	56,071	38,458	9.880	25.7%
ACC 1990	3,801	2,424	1,495	476	31.8%
State 1990	77,144	51,453	34,790	8,812	25.3%

Source: *Transfer Effectiveness Reports, 1990-1993*

ACC FTIC transfer rates compare favorably with statewide FTIC transfer rates for each of the four cohort years displayed. For each cohort year, of the FTIC cohort students who did not return to

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ACC, nearly one third were enrolled in a Texas public senior institution within four years following their first enrollment at ACC. For this same time period, one fourth of all statewide FTIC cohort students were enrolled in a Texas public senior institution.

It is worth noting, however, that the percent of change from one year to the next for ACC's FTIC transfer rates varies much more than the percent of change for statewide transfer rates. Whereas the statewide change in FTIC transfer rate from one year to the next has varied slightly in a downward trend, ACC's transfer rate fluctuates from one cohort year to the next, and for the most current cohort year, is higher than the previous year.

To which universities do they transfer?

Identifying the senior institutions in which students enroll when they leave ACC assists the College in inviting articulation agreements with, and requesting performance data from, those senior institutions, thereby improving the transfer process for students. The THECB report, *Students Pursuing Additional Education--By Institution (Graduates and Non-Returners),* tracks non-returning students who were enrolled in a Texas public community or technical college during a given academic year and then enrolled the following fall semester in any Texas public higher education institution. For each community or technical college, the report lists the number of its non-returning (including graduates) students who transferred to community colleges, universities, or health sciences centers. Beginning with the 1996 academic year, the THECB provided a statewide comparison report of these data. Data from this report can be used to answer the question, "Of the students who transfer to another institution during the fall semester after leaving ACC, what proportion enrolled in Texas public universities?"

The *Students Pursuing Additional Education--By Institution (Graduates and Non-Returners)* report also provides information on which specific institutions ACC graduates and non-returning students transferred to from one academic year to the next. Data for the past five years indicate approximately 90 percent of ACC's non-returning students who transferred to Texas public universities enrolled in one of four universities to continue their education: The University of Texas at Austin (UT), Southwest Texas State University (SWTSU), Texas A&M University (TAMU), or Texas Tech University (TTU). Those who do not transfer to these universities enroll in one of 31 other Texas public universities. Table 2 displays these data.

Consistently over the past five years, just under two thirds (63.4% - 64.3%) of ACC's non-returning students who transferred to a Texas public university enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin following their last ACC enrollment, and about one fifth (19.1% - 21.3%) enrolled in Southwest Texas State University to continue their education. The percent of students transferring to SWTSU has been increasing steadily since academic year 1992-93, while the percentages of students enrolling in UT and all other Texas public universities has fluctuated.

—President's Effectiveness Council

Table 2: Texas Public Universities to which ACC's Non-Returning Students Transferred

Year	University of Texas at Austin		Southwest Texas State University		Texas A&M University		Texas Tech University		31 Other Texas Public Universities		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
1996-97	5,057	63.6%	1,691	21.3%	340	4.3%	162	2.0%	701	8.8%	7,951
1995-96	5,697	63.8%	1,844	20.6%	366	4.1%	201	2.2%	828	9.3%	8,936
1994-95	5,512	63.4%	1,754	20.2%	439	5.0%	196	2.3%	796	9.2%	8,697
1993-94	5,393	64.3%	1,641	19.6%	406	4.8%	183	2.2%	770	9.2%	8,393
1992-93	5,270	64.2%	1,565	19.1%	441	5.4%	134	1.6%	794	9.7%	8,204

Source: Academic Year 1996-97 *Students Pursuing Additional Education--By Institution (Graduates and Non-Returners)*

Graduates Respond—Favorably!

Each fall, Austin Community College surveys its graduates of the previous year to collect information regarding the effectiveness of both transfer and workforce programs. Additionally, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board requires colleges to annually submit outcomes data to determine program effectiveness and funding.

The ACC 1996-97 Graduate Survey was distributed during the spring of 1998 to 1,089 graduates of the 1996-97 academic year. A total of 505 (46.4%) responses were received. Graduates were asked to respond to questions about their current employment status, whether their degree or certificate was required for their job, any further education beyond their ACC work, any volunteer work involving ACC training, and their opinion of how well ACC prepared them for employment or further education.

The chart below illustrates, of the 1,089 1996-97 graduates, 447 graduates (41.0%) are (or were, at one time) employed. Of those, 372 (34.1%) were employed in a job that required training in the field in which they majored.

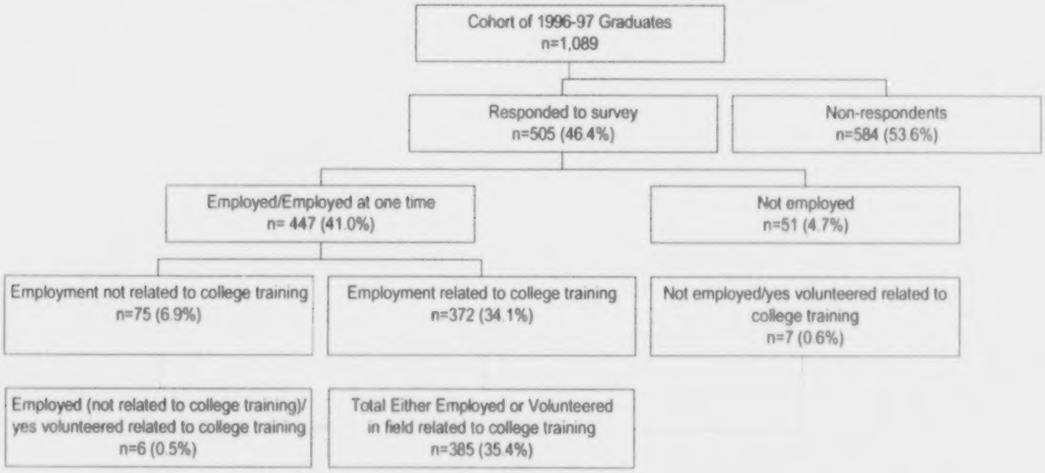
Additionally, of the graduates responding to the survey, most rated ACC's preparation for employment as "excellent" (53.3%) or "satisfactory" (29.5%).

Please rate how well you feel ACC prepared you for employment or further education. My preparation was...

	N	%
Excellent	269	53.3
Satisfactory	149	29.5
Good only in some areas	59	11.7
Fair	20	4.0
Inadequate	2	0.4

—Joe Vasquez
Research Specialist
Institutional Effectiveness

Graduate Follow-Up Survey Results 1996-97 Graduates
(Note: all percentages are of the total number of 1996-97 graduates.)


Cohort of 1996-97 Graduates n=1,089
Responded to survey n=505 (46.4%)
Non-respondents n=584 (53.6%)
Employed/Employed at one time n= 447 (41.0%)
Not employed n=51 (4.7%)
Employment not related to college training n=75 (6.9%)
Employment related to college training n=372 (34.1%)
Not employed/yes volunteered related to college training n=7 (0.6%)
Employed (not related to college training)/ yes volunteered related to college training n=6 (0.5%)
Total Either Employed or Volunteered in field related to college training n=385 (35.4%)

An Orientation Toward Success

As part of the Human Development program's assessment process for 1998/99, we decided to assess the effectiveness of HDP 1601. We gathered qualitative data with feedback forms collected from students who completed the course. With the assistance of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, we designed a study to determine whether our intended outcomes of the course were achieved. This article summarizes our quantitative assessment study.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes

HDP 1601, a new Orientation course developed during the spring and summer, and implemented during the fall of 1998, was designed to increase the success and retention of incoming freshmen students who failed either two or more skill areas of the assessment tests or one area at a fundamental level, i.e., "at risk" students. The course would facilitate students' transition into Austin Community College and provide them a strong foundation for effective learning, thereby increasing the likelihood that they would continue in college. Objectives of the course were the following:

- to provide students an orientation to the college experience, ACC, and the course itself
- to assess students' current expectations, motivations, strengths and areas for improvement
- to assist students in setting effective academic, personal, and career goals
- to familiarize students with college support services and resources
- to develop and increase students' self-management skills for creating successful outcomes
- to provide students an introduction to essential learning and study skills for academic success.

Assessment of Outcomes

In Fall 1998 there were 7,707 entering students. Of these, 1,862 students failed two or more areas of the assessment test or failed at least one area at the fundamental level. Student Services Counselors enrolled 342 of these "at risk" students in the HDP 1601 Orientation course, while the remaining 1,520 students did not enroll in the course. Study cohorts were identified as follows:

- **Cohort I–Successful Completers:** Those students who took the course and successfully completed it with a grade of A, B, or C (N=262)
- **Cohort II–Unsuccessful Completers:** Those students who took the course but did not successfully complete it (grades of D, F, W, or I) (N=80)
- **Cohort III–Did Not Take:** Those students who were identified as "at risk" by their assessment scores, but did not enroll in the orientation course (N=1,520)
- **Cohort IV–Not "At Risk":** All remaining entering students (N=5,845)

Cohorts I through III identify students who begin their college careers at risk for failure and must take remedial level courses in reading, writing, or math prior to beginning college-level credit courses. Students in Cohort IV, on the other hand, have demonstrated college-level skills competencies allowing them to take college-level credit courses. They are included for benchmarking only.

Intended Outcomes

The student outcomes we expected to achieve were that successfully completing this one credit-hour, five-week long course would increase retention of "at risk" students and their success in college. Retention was defined as enrollment in the following semester (Spring 1999); success was defined by four indicators as follows:

- Grade point average
- Hours attempted
- Hours earned
- Course withdrawals

Assessment Procedures and Criteria

Using student level data from the student information system, retention into the following semester was calculated and cohort averages for the student success indicators were compared. We would know the course had achieved the retention outcome if a higher percentage of Cohort I students enrolled the following semester than Cohorts II and III. The other outcome would be achieved to the degree that there was a positive difference between the means for Cohort I and Cohorts II and III on each of the success indicators.

Summary and Analysis of Data

The data show that a greater percentage of Cohort I:

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Successful Completers re-enrolled the following semester (Spring 1999) than all other cohorts. On each of the success indicators, Cohort I also performed better than any of the other cohorts. The differences in performance were found to be statistically significant in each case. Particularly remarkable were results in the areas of course withdrawals during the semester and retention into the following semester. See Table 1.

Table 1: Cohort Retention and Performance by Success Indicator

Success Indicator Means	I: Successful Completers N=262	II: Unsuccessful Completers N=80	III: Did Not Take N=1,520	IV: Not "At Risk" N=5,845
Retention Rates	66.8%	27.5%	53.1%	53.4%
GPA	2.77	1.03	2.61	2.67
Hours Attempted	7.30	3.41	5.97	6.39
Hours Earned	6.56	1.86	5.26	5.66
Course Withdrawals	0.33	2.00	0.50	0.54

An additional set of calculations was completed to determine the effect of this course on retention of minority populations. The retention rate for minorities was improved or maintained as a result of successfully completing the course. There was a dramatic difference between the re-enrollment of Hispanic students completing the course successfully and Hispanic students in all other cohorts. See Table 2.

Table 2: Students Enrolling in the Subsequent Semester by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Cohort I: Successful Completers		Cohort II: Unsuccessful Completers		Cohort III: Did Not Take		Cohort IV: Not "At Risk"	
White	94	(53.7%)	12	(54.5%)	526	(65.2%)	2,146	(68.8%)
Black	17	(9.7%)	1	(4.5%)	61	(7.6%)	121	(3.9%)
Hispanic	53	(30.3%)	5	(22.7%)	169	(20.9%)	582	(18.7%)
Other*	11	(6.3%)	4	(18.1%)	51	(6.3%)	270	(8.6%)
Total**	175	(100%)	22	(99.8%**)	807	(100%)	100	(100%)

*Includes Asian, American Indian, Other **Totals do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

Plans for Improvement

The study confirmed achievement of the outcomes we were assessing: Successful completion of HDP 1601—Orientation did increase retention and success of students entering ACC with skills levels that place them "at risk."

We will analyze the qualitative data collected from students to determine future course improvements. Also, at the end of the spring semester, we will track success and retention of those students who re-enrolled to determine whether the outcomes this study identified are maintained over time. In Fall 1999, more sections of the Orientation course will be offered at more locations and times.

—Tobin Quereau
Associate Professor
Human Development

Math Pilot : Study Skills Attached Labs

Background

The study skills pilot project was conducted in the Fall 1998 semester, at the Rio Grande campus. One section each of Basic Math Skills and Elementary Algebra were combined with the respective labs. All students in the lecture sections were required to co-enroll in the related lab course.

Curriculum in the lab course was based on two books by Paul Nolting: *Winning at Math,* 3nd edition (cost is about $25) and *Math Skills Workbook* (cost is about $13). The textbook has 11 chapters, covering topics from time management to test taking skills. The workbook corresponds to chapters from the text, but the material is shortened and organized so students can answer questions as they read the chapter. All content in both the text and workbook was specifically written for the math student. More details on the curriculum content of the text and workbook, as well as weekly journals submitted by the instructors can be found on the Math Task Force web page:

http://www.austin.cc.tx.us/mparker/tf98-99/commrepts/pilot.htm

The syllabus for the lab classes was designed to closely follow the syllabus in their respective courses. For example, students worked in groups to prepare for each test in the course and analyzed their tests after they had been graded. All chapters in the workbook were covered, as well as the chapters in the text that were not duplicated in the workbook. In addition, the syllabus included videos on math attitudes, test preparation, and test analysis.

The instructors for the lecture/lab combinations were Betsy Kreisle (Basic Math Skills) and Irene Doo (Elementary Algebra). In addition, Diane Kramer, counselor at Rio Grande, worked closely with the instructors in a variety of ways. She administered and interpreted learning style inventories to students and instructor, presented guest lectures on learning strategies and test anxiety, and co-presented on learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. She also assisted students with analysis of error types on their exams and how to modify study skills to correct frequently occurring errors. She provided individual written feedback to students and group discussion on student's math autobiography assignment. Some students also sought out individual counseling.

Results

Impact on Grades: The following grade distributions were submitted at the end of the semester for both the attached lab sections and the lecture-only sections of both courses with both instructors.

Based on the final letter grades for the students at the end of the semester, it is clear that the Basic Math Skills students in the attached lab section showed higher performance results compared to the lecture-only sections. The difference in the Elementary Algebra sections was not as pronounced. Informal feedback from the instructors and counselors also indicated that the study skills curriculum would be most effective at the lower level courses in Developmental Math.

Grade	Basic Math Skills				Elementary Algebra			
	Attached Lab		Lecture Only		Attached Lab		Lecture Only [1]	
A	4	33%	2	13%	2	11%	2	15%
B	3	25%	2	13%	4	22%	2	15%
C	1	8%	3	20%	4	22%	4	31%
D	0	0%	2	13%	2	11%	0	0%
F	2	17%	0	0%	1	6%	2	15%
W	2	17%	6	40%	5	28%	3	23%
Total	12	100%	15	100%	18	100%	13	100%

Impact on Affective Factors: Anecdotal feedback from students, instructors, and the counselor showed a huge impact on organization of homework study and test preparation, as well as students' self-esteem, understanding of themselves as learners, and attitudes toward math. For example, the math autobiographies, as a whole, were very negative in tone and revealed anxiety, fear, shame, anger, and even psychological and physical abuse associated with prior math experiences. The autobiographies also discussed many instances of math avoidance resulting in lost educational and occupational opportunities. Most students reported that the study skills class was a positive learning experience; for many, the only one associated with math. In the counselor's opinion and not at all antici-

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pated, the class became an actual "therapeutic" experience, with many students reporting great improvement in their self-esteem and reduction in academic anxiety. Many of the students in the study skills pilot said they benefited from learning how to study math and highly recommended the inclusion of a study skills curriculum with the developmental math courses. In fact, most of the students in the Elementary Algebra class who had previously taken Basic Math Skills and/or Pre-algebra at ACC expressed their wish that they had learned math study skills in their first developmental math class at the College.

Recommendations

In the Spring 1999 semester, one section each of Basic Math skills and Pre-algebra was combined with the respective study skills lab. Unfortunately, low enrollments prior to the start of the semester resulted in both sections being cancelled. Causes of the low enrollment could have been poor placement of the sections in the schedule, inadequate information provided to the advisors, and reluctance of students to enroll in and pay for an additional lab section.

Given the reluctance of students to sign up for extra classes that they do not perceive as necessary to achieving their educational goals, the recommendation is to discontinue the offering of *mandatory* attached labs.

Since the number of students participating in the pilot is small, these recommendations are tenuous and further study is advised. However, since Nolting's research and the results of the one semester study skills pilot at ACC have both shown that study skills are an important factor in the success of developmental math students, it is recommended that a limited version of the study skills curriculum be integrated into all developmental math courses. In the interest of keeping the additional cost to the students at a minimum, the Math Study Skills Workbook (cost about $13) will be the only required text for the optional study skills curriculum. In addition, the textbook *Winning at Math* will be available in the reference section of the learning resource centers at each campus, as will be accompanying video(s) and software. The syllabus and instructor notes to accompany the workbook will be provided in the math manual, and all instructors would have the option of incorporating the study skills curriculum into their existing syllabus.

Additional recommendations include counselors college-wide to acquire skills in working with math specific affective and learning issues and to provide individual counseling and workshops for students taking developmental math. It is also recommended that counselors be available to instructors and tutors for consultation on these issues.

—Irene Doo, Associate Professor
Math
Diane Kramer, Professor
Retention & Student Services Counseling

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When the Chemistry's Right—Web It!

The World Wide Web (WWW) is growing in use as an alternative forum for instruction. Each time distance education takes on a new technology, the purpose is usually to increase flexibility and/or accessibility of instruction. But educators must beware of whether such "tech gizmos" actually promote and sustain learning. Thus, evaluating students' learning *and* attitudes is essential to assessing the effectiveness of this new tool.

Due to concerns about whether students could learn such abstract concepts as those presented in a chemistry course via WWW, but still interested in web courses, I chose to write a small module of material for the web instead of a full semester's course. In doing so, I was able to do a portion of the work in preparation, but perform full-scale assessments for its viability.

In order to make an online or web course, an instructor must realize several important issues:

- more time is required of the instructor for *preparing* the online course, as compared to face-to-face (in-class) instruction
- more time is required of the instructor *during* the online course
- to be well organized, the online course requires a great deal of planning
- the instructor needs to be more aware of student concerns and attitudes while writing and delivering the online course (i.e. watch for misconceptions, don't leave student alienated or isolated, etc.)
- the instructor does not have to work alone—technical personnel and instructional designers can offer much assistance

Luckily, there are several sources of advice and pointers on how to design and implement an online course (see references).

Methodology

A database software program called WebCT was the backbone structure of the web course module. The WebCT software has several functions including homepage(s), chat, bulletin board, content pages, calendar, private email, keyword searching, online quiz software, and student tracking. These functions allowed me, as instructor, to build a very versatile and interactive web course and to track student progress through that course (and a knowledge of HTML was not a prerequisite).

The design and development stage of the web course was the most time-consuming. Considerable effort was made to instill in the course some "humanness" for the students (and for myself). I wanted to make a course that would be more accessible than traditional courses, but that wouldn't leave the student feeling isolated or confused. Thus, several technologies were incorporated:

- use of college-approved textbook
- on-line content notes/instruction "lectures" via WWW (WebCT)
- disk-based tutorials (see references)
- asynchronous student to student and student to instructor discussions (bulletin board)
- opportunity to send/receive documents between students and between students and instructor (email)
- hardcopy handouts and worksheets

The bulletin board in WebCT is like email, but where email is sent specifically to one person, the letters in the bulletin board are posted publicly, for all class members to see on the web. Also, where email is listed chronologically, the bulletin board is organized by topic and sub-topic. The bulletin board was utilized for both content and casual discussions. This mixture helped to liven the web site and give a personal feel to it-something that was appreciated by the students and myself.

I also wanted to make sure that this much time and effort on my part was "worth it". Therefore, I conducted surveys and evaluations of the students' attitudes and learning. That is the focus of this paper.

The web-course module, which covered the concepts of atomic structure and the quantum model of the atom, was offered as an alternative for my students in Introduction to Chemistry, CHM 1614. For three weeks, five volunteer students participated in the web course instead of attending classroom instruction; however,

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they still attended weekly laboratories. Those five are the participants in the surveys which will be discussed next.

A multi-question survey was conducted using online quizzes (WebCT) both before the student began the three-week module and after each completed the module. The two surveys differed slightly in composition, but consisted of multiple choice and free-response questions to assess student attitudes. (Surveys available upon request.)

Results

According to the pre-module survey, the students who volunteered for the web-based module expected to learn more than they would have in face-to-face instruction and expected to spend more time on the web course than if they had attended traditional instruction. These expectations may be due, at least in part, to four of the five students having had prior experience with some form of distance education.

The primary motivation for volunteering for the web course was "to try it out" or to overcome barriers of location and time. In addition, the students expressed their views of the primary benefits of online education: time flexibility, self-pacing, location, money saved by not commuting, and ability to print out or re-read course materials. The primary drawbacks mentioned included: fear of isolation, fear of miscommunication, conception that the web-course would be impersonal, absence of gestures and the human element, and the "hassle of having to write everything out". When asked what their primary concern was in entering the online course, responses fit into three categories: grades and assignments, expectations, and environmental distractions.

Knowing the students' fears and expectations at the onset helped me to alter the course slightly to encourage more interaction among the students and make a conscious effort to promote open, clear communication of such issues as expectations (e.g. assignments) and grading criteria. Without such feedback from the students, I may not have succeeded as well in my communications with them. For example, I may not have realized their fears, which could have formed a barrier to their learning.

Results Post-Course Survey

After completing the three-week online module, students' attitudes remained about the same. They still believed that ACC should offer more online courses and would recommend online courses to a friend. In addition, they would recommend *this* online course to a friend.

The students felt they had spent more time with the online course than they would have spent with traditional instruction, but felt their time was "worth it". They also felt they learned more (one of five) or much more (four of five) than they would have in face-to-face instruction.

After completing the online course, the primary benefits listed by the students included time flexibility, money saved, self-pacing, and ability to re-review contents, which are similar to the responses to the pre-course module questionnaire. Differences were the additional benefits of "interacted with other students", "responsibility of learning rests more heavily on the student", "if you learn something, you truly learn it", and the supplemental materials (including handouts and informative web sites). The drawbacks included: "not being able to go online with everybody [and] chat", "lack of interaction with other students", "at own pace", "deadlines could have been clearer", "having to use written communication", and "it was easy to procrastinate".

As for what the students felt to be the greatest motivation in completing the web course: grades.

Comments

The students appreciated the bulletin board (asynchronous discussion) and each read every posting. We discussed everything from movies to photons and, when misconceptions did arise, both the students and I responded to gently correct it. In fact, the students were adept at helping each other learn both the content and the technologies. And, while they felt they had adequate contact with me (the instructor), they yearned for more contact with their peers. This could be handled with a chat program. (WebCT's chat function was not an option during this study.) This point is mentioned to impress upon other instructors that students do in fact need and want both synchronous and asynchronous forms of communication with web courses. In fact, motivation is closely tied to interaction with regard to web-based instruction, according to the literature.

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The students who participated in the web course showed an increase in scores on a quiz given before and after the module, thus showing that learning occurred. It must be noted, however, that this was an extraordinary group of students. They consistently scored better on all exams in class (by averages), 4 out of 5 were science majors, and 4 out of 5 had prior experience with distance instruction. Thus, educators should realize that their student groups may vary in performance due to students' prior experience and motivations.

Conclusions

With regard to the characteristics of the student participants in my web-based course, the web is a viable alternative form of instruction for abstract courses such as the Introduction to Chemistry course. Evaluation of the students in three stages (the onset of the web module, throughout the module via student emails, and at the completion of it) proved very helpful in providing feedback about how the students felt (thus leading to information about student motivations), how the students learned, and what "worked" and what didn't.

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—Deborah Walker
Adjunct Faculty
Chemistry

We Hear You!

The most consistent feedback the Office of Institutional Effectiveness received in response to its Evaluation questionnaire was, "*We don't know what services and products you provide.*"

Our office is really not a "secret agency"—Really! To help dispel that belief, on the last page of this publication you will find a list of the services we provide faculty and staff and the products (publications and reports) we produce, as well as the procedures for accessing them.

Additionally, all publications from this office will carry our newly created "logo" that is printed below. This logo will help you identify OIE publications in a flash, so you'll know where the publication came from and whom to contact regarding it.

ie

Program Review Schedule 1999 - 2000

Applied Technologies, Multimedia and Public Service
Photography Commercial Art Printing Commercial Music

Arts and Humanities
Developmental Reading Developmental Writing
English as a Second Language

Business Studies
Office Administration Management
Business Management Financial Management

Computer Studies and Advanced Technology
Quality Assurance Electronic Technology
Computer Information Systems/Computer Science

Health Sciences
Diagnostic Medical Imaging—Sonography
Diagnostic Medical Imaging—Radiology Medical Lab Technology

Math and Sciences
Mathematics (including Developmental Math)
Chemistry

Social and Behavioral Sciences
History

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Quest for Quality: Instructional Program Review

OVERVIEW

The **Instructional Program Review Process** focuses on aspects of need, cost and effectiveness of instructional programs. Specifically, is the instructional quality of the program high enough to meet institutionally set standards?

What is a program?

For purposes of program review, a program is an organizational unit within the college that provides instructional or support services. The process outlined here focuses on instructional programs.

Purpose of Program Review Process

- Continuously improve the program.
- Assess strengths and weaknesses of a program as well as the opportunities and threats it faces.
- Determine the capabilities of the program.
- Break down barriers between areas of operation.
- Ensure best uses of resources—fiscal, human, facilities, equipment, technology.
- Articulate the program's mission and vision.
- Provide the foundation for application to the Greater Austin Quality Council (Baldrige Criteria).
- Respond to Board policy.

Characteristics of Program Review Process

The Instructional Program Review Process:

- Provides for identification of improvements.
- Includes standards of academic quality.
- Allows for better decision-making, including modifications, budget, strategic planning.
- Is integrated into the Institutional Effectiveness process.
- Is integrated into other external review process, including the THECB site review, SACS accreditation, and program-specific reviews required by other agencies.
- Ensures that customer focus is integrated into the program.
- Creates an opportunity for broad-based input from constituencies including students, staff, faculty, and employers.
- Is a cyclical process with the expectation that there will be continuous review within the program.
- Assesses the degree to which the program is fulfilling its mission and accomplishing its goals.

Administration of the Program Review Process

Oversight of the Program Review Process in instructional programs is the responsibility of the **Instructional Program Review Committee**. Membership includes one faculty member from each dean area. Appointments are made biennially and members serve for 2 years. The Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness serves as an ad hoc member. This Committee is chaired by a member of the Committee selected by the Executive Vice President for Instruction.

The responsibilities of the Instructional Program Review Committee include:

- Overseeing the Program Review Process to ensure that it occurs within the stated timeline.
- Monitoring of the implementation of the Program Review Process.
- Providing assistance to units involved in the process.
- Evaluating the overall process.
- Developing modifications as necessary to ensure the process functions effectively.
- Developing modifications of the Indicators of Effectiveness, including related criteria, as needed.
- Reviewing self-study reports.

Guidelines for Implementation

In consultation with the administration, Deans determine the order in which programs in their areas will be reviewed. New programs will be incorporated into the timeline as they are developed. In most cases, program review will not occur during the first 3 years of program implementation.

Self Study Team

In consultation with the Program Coordinator or Taskforce Chair, each Dean will designate a Self-study Team for each instructional area to be evaluated. The primary responsibilities of the Self-study Team are to collect and analyze information, develop the Self-study Report, and make recommendations.

The Chair is the key member of the Self-study Team. The Chair's responsibility begins during the Spring Term prior to the Self-study and continues through the next academic year until the final Self-study report has been submitted.

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Indicators of Effectiveness

The basis of the Program Review Process is the analysis of information relating to a set of Core Indicators which have been identified by the Program Review Work Group and reflect input from a variety of sources. They include indicators that have been identified by federal, state and regional agencies (including SACS, the LBB, and the THECB) as well as "best practices" identified in similar processes at other community colleges.

As part of the Self-study process, Self-study Teams in consultation with the Dean and Instructional Program Review Committee will select the specific indicators on which their analysis will focus. The only exception to this is a set of required indicators that are defined by SACS, the LBB, the THECB, other agencies, and/or institutional priorities.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

The Self-study begins with an analysis of the information related to the core indicators selected by the Self-study Team. Then the Self-study Team considers the following:

- **Review of Mission/Vision.** The Mission of the instructional area will be reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflect the need for the program/discipline.

- **Identification of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.** As part of the Self-study, the program will conduct a SWOT to determine the strategic priorities that need to be addressed.

- **Integration of Baldrige Criteria (optional).** Programs interested in using quality-based criteria or pursing one of the quality awards may do so as part of the Program Review process. Specific information is available through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

- **Recommendations.** The Self-study Team should identify the major issues that need to be addressed as a result of information gathered during the self-study process. It should then identify what will be done to address the issues identified. In most cases, 5 to 10 recommendations will be made.

- **Action Plans.** As part of the Self-study, the Taskforce Chair/Program Coordinator must develop Action Plans for each Recommendation. Action Plans are proposals for change and may serve as guidelines for future planning activities.

- **Institutional Effectiveness Measures.** At least three Institutional Effectiveness Measures need to be identified. Assistance on developing these can be provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

- **Implications for the Budget Process.** The Taskforce Chair/Program Coordinator should develop an outline of operational planning priorities for next budget cycle. This should be shared with the Dean and Associate Vice President during the budget process.

DOCUMENTATION NOTEBOOKS

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) will provide documentation notebooks for each instructional area going through the Instructional Program Review Process. These notebooks include data and materials from federal and state reports as well as those developed by the OIE.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS ACADEMIC YEARS 1999 and 2000

Lynn Beaman (Chair),
Applied Technologies, Multi Media and Public Service

Guadalupe Lopez-Cox, Arts and Humanities

Dwayne Crowley, Business Studies

Ken Peterson, Computer Studies / Advanced Technology

Jere Hammer, Health Sciences

Mary Parker, Math and Sciences

Gaye Lynn Scott, Social and Behavioral Sciences

—Martha Oburn
Associate Vice President
Institutional Effectiveness

Survey Savvy: If You Want to Know, Ask...Effectively!

- *Variety and convenience were the two things students taking Vocational Nursing via distance learning liked most about the course.*
- *ACC Graduates rated their preparation for employment or further education "Excellent"*
- *Pharmacists in the Austin area prefer to hire a pharmacy technician who has completed a formalized, structured pharmacy technician training program over someone who has not.*

Each of these statements is based on data gathered by a survey. Surveys provide information that is useful in outcomes studies, information from which faculty may formulate course improvement strategies.

However, surveys are not "magic." Good survey design requires some thought and effort. When planning a survey, remember the following guidelines. If you will need their assistance, contact the OIE as early in your planning process as feasible; OIE staff can work with you to complete the survey tasks.

Determine when you will need to report the data that are to be collected. The complete survey process usually takes about four to six months from first step to completing a report of the results. Creating a timeline from the finish date to the first task will ensure you complete the survey report on time.

Identify the questions you want the data to answer. What is it you want to know from conducting the survey? These are the overall reasons for conducting the survey.

Identify the data you need to answer those questions. Do you need performance data, opinions, comparisons based on some criteria, etc.? The data you need will form the foundation of the data collection instrument.

Identify the people from whom you will gather the data. Responses from which group of people will provide you the most useful data? Surveying students to determine their satisfaction with job placement services, for example, is useful only if the students you survey have used the services of the job placement office. Also, if your questions require data from people who meet specific characteristics, this is the step wherein you identify those characteristics (students with 0-9 hours, students with 10-15 hours, students majoring in X, etc.).

Determine when to conduct the survey. In general, the information you are collecting determines when you conduct the survey. If your major interest has to do with information about expectations of a course/ experience, for example, the survey will be conducted at the beginning of the semester/course/experience. If, on the other hand, you are seeking information regarding student experience of a course or with the use of services, the survey would provide most useful results at the end of the semester or after the use of the service. If you are measuring impact or change resulting from an experience you may wish to survey the selected group both before and after the experience.

Design the methodology for conducting the survey. This is the step where you decide the procedures for conducting the survey: how many people you will survey, how you will survey them (by phone, in class, a mailed questionnaire, etc.), how you will distribute and collect questionnaires, make follow-up contacts, prepare the questionnaires for data entry, etc. OIE can transform your questionnaire into a scan (bubble sheet) form for easier data analysis.

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> *"A survey is a system for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Surveys involve setting objectives for information collection, designing research, preparing a reliable and valid data collection instrument, administering and scoring the instrument, analyzing the data, and reporting the results."*
>
> *Arlene Fink*
>
> *The Survey Handbook. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 1995.*

(Continued from page 13)

Design and produce the questionnaire. Creating a useful questionnaire, a topic about which many books have been written, requires careful thought and skillful application of some basic rules. Keep in mind a survey questionnaire should be as brief as possible (aim for no more than one side of a single page at most) and should create as little frustration as possible to increase the likelihood that it will be completed and returned. The aim of a useful questionnaire is to help the people you are surveying give you the information you need in a form that is useful.

Include only those questions which are important to the current study. Don't ask for "age" if it is not pertinent to answering your outcomes question.

Make the questions specific; avoid vague qualifiers and abstract terms. Terms like "usually," "most," and "now" are full of ambiguity; rather use "each day/week/semester," "4 of 5 times," or "since you completed the class."

Start with easier questions and move to more difficult or boring ones. The first questions should be chosen with care. They should "hook" the reader into answering the survey questions.

Ask questions in logical order. Avoid "contingency" questions; those where if you check "yes" to one question, you then "GO TO" another set of questions elsewhere. They are confusing and tend to lower the number of completed questionnaires returned.

Construct response categories carefully. Response categories must allow for all possible responses yet not be too long. If you are asking students how much time they spend studying, you would want to include "never" as well as "X hours every day" but you would not want to list all the number of hours in a day. You would provide categories of hours within the day, such as "1-3 hours per day," "4-6 hours per day," etc.

Provide clear and sufficient directions, including the reason for the survey, whether responses are to be anonymous or confidential, how the respondent is to complete the questionnaire and what to do with it when they have.

In other words, as you are constructing the questionnaire, keep in mind the last survey questionnaire *you* were asked to complete and design yours the way you wish it had been designed, i.e., from the perspective of those who will be completing it.

When possible, have about ten people who are similar to those you plan to survey complete the questionnaire and give you feedback, then make improvements accordingly. Are the directions clear? Are the questions easy to understand? Does the format invite responses? How long did it take them to complete the questionnaire?

Conduct the survey. Distribute questionnaires as outlined in the "methodology." As they are returned, track the number completed. If your questionnaire was a scan form/bubble sheet, "clean up" the responses, i.e., make sure bubbles are completely filled in, use a pencil to go over any bubbles that were filled in with ink, erase any stray marks, and be sure all identifying data are complete (section number or course number for example). As the deadline for returning the questionnaire approaches, determine whether you will send a reminder to return the questionnaire. Reminders can be as simple as a postcard—Did Your Return the X Survey Questionnaire Yet?—or more complex—another questionnaire and a reminder note or even a phone call to those people who have not returned the questionnaire requesting they do so "now" over the phone.

Analyze the data. There are several software packages available to analyze data, but if these are not available to you, the OIE can help you with this task.

Report the results. The final task of conducting a survey is to communicate the findings clearly and accurately so they can be used for making decisions. Your report should include a meaningful title. "Student Survey Results" says little; "Factors Related to Student Attrition" says much more. To orient the reader to your report, include the purpose of the study and how the survey was conducted (the methodology used). Provide a summary of your results, including any tables or charts displaying data. And finally, draw your conclusions and make recommendations based on your findings.

—Roslyn Wallace
Institutional Outcomes Coordinator
Institutional Effectiveness

Q&A

Q: How do we decide which group to target for a survey?

A: The answer to this question depends on who your audiences are and what you want to know. Do you want to know how students learned about your program and what they expect from it? Then, a survey of students just entering the major is appropriate. Are you interested in exploring students: perceptions of the major program and how well it met their expectations? Surveying graduating seniors would give you this information. Are you interested in determining how well students in your program were prepared for employment? Surveying employers of graduates of your program would provide that information. In other words, the group you survey would be selected based on their ability to provide data to answer the question your survey is trying to answer.

Q: How can we ensure a good response rate on our surveys?

A: One of the most crucial factors affecting response rate is the length of the survey. A survey should take only 15 minutes or so to complete. Appearance is important; the questionnaire should be easy to fill out, with clear and concise instructions. A cover letter that explains the purpose of the survey and assures confidentiality of the respondents' answers can make a significant difference in whether the questionnaire is completed and returned, as well. If you are distributing the questionnaire to be completed and returned at a later date, a postcard (or e-mail or phone call) reminder can boost response rate quite a bit.

Q: Should our survey be anonymous?

A: Surveys should be *confidential:* results are processed and reported in such a way that individual responses cannot be identified. However, some people will not respond to the questionnaire without the assurance of total anonymity. Four things should be considered when deciding whether to conduct the survey anonymously:

- the nature of your questions—do they ask for information that respondents may be hesitant to share?
- the people you are surveying—are they sympathetic to the goals of your survey or suspicious of your motives?
- the amount of factual information you need—if the survey is anonymous, you will not be able to match additional information available from other data sources which you may wish to use in your analysis, e.g., GPA, credit hours earned to date, etc. The more you can get information of this type elsewhere, the shorter the questionnaire will be and likely, the greater the response rate.
- the importance of follow-up mailings—a follow-up reminder for a "complete elsewhere" survey will be impossible if the survey is anonymous, however, if students are to complete the questionnaire in class, there is no need for a follow-up reminder.

Q: What survey tasks can be delegated to someone else?

A: Duplication of the questionnaire and cover letter, assembly of the questionnaire "packets," and tracking returned questionnaires may be designated to someone else, but avoid "slicing up" the work of conducting a survey among too many people. Conducting a survey is one task where the saying, "Too many cooks spoil the broth" is very true. Invite input from others, but identify one, or at most two, people to be responsible for the overall conduct of the survey. A "task" list on which you check off each survey task as it is completed is a very useful tool for tracking the progress of the survey. And, of course, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is always available to assist with your survey tasks.

OIE At Your Service

To assist you in making decisions and assessing the effectiveness of your area, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides services to faculty, staff and administrators through reports and other publications produced on a regular basis, specialized assistance provided on request, and maintenance of a comprehensive web site that includes both the college-wide strategic planning database and the institutional effectiveness database as well as other resources for program review and studies of college-wide issues.

Publications and Reports Provided on a Regular Basis

- The *Daily Registration Update* is generated daily and posted to the OIE web site in .pdf format. This report displays current headcount, contact hours, and credit hours by college-wide totals as well as by campus location and Dean area.

- The *Effectiveness Update* summarizes effectiveness measures, criteria, and outcomes for college-wide missions such as transfer, workforce, student access, and student retention. This report is posted to the OIE web site and paper copies are distributed to all college employees.

- The *ACC Effectiveness Review* is published once each fall and spring semester. This publication contains summaries of effectiveness studies conducted by ACC faculty and staff, assessment information, and a "Q&A" section. It is distributed to all college employees and also posted to the OIE web site.

- The *Enrollment Comparison* is posted to the OIE web site each semester and compares headcount, demographic, credit hour, contact hour, and Full Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) data for all sessions of the current academic semester with those data for the same semester of the previous academic year.

- The *ACC Fact Book* is published once each year. This document provides a comprehensive five-year snapshot of demographic information on students, faculty, and staff, as well as programs and facilities. It also includes budget and finance information and general information about the College--its history and mission, etc. Printed copies are distributed to Administrators, Task Force Chairs and Program Coordinators, the campus Provost's offices, and the LRS at each campus. It is also available on the OIE web site. Faculty and staff may request personal copies from the OIE.

- The *Preliminary Enrollment/High Demand/Headcount Attrition Reports* are published each semester following the close of registration. This document provides information on student headcount, sections, enrollments, and contact hours, as well as the number of students who could not enroll in full sections (high demand courses) by discipline.

Assistance Provided on Request

The staff of the OIE can provide the following types of assistance to faculty and staff to assess the effectiveness of units or areas.

- Defining Institutional Effectiveness measures and outcomes
- Designing study methodology
    - Clarifying study questions.
    - Defining demographics needed for analysis.
    - Selecting population samples.
    - Determining study tasks and timelines.
- Designing data collection instruments including evaluation forms and survey questionnaires
- Converting data collection instruments into scanable forms.
- Analyzing and summarizing data you have collected, including student's course evaluations and feedback.
- Conducting Focus Groups

College-wide Services include assistance with program review, strategic planning, and the institutional effectiveness process. OIE coordinates federal and state reporting and can provide data for grant applications.

The OIE Web Site

OIE maintains a web site on ACCNet. All our publications, reports, and college-wide studies are posted to this site. As studies of college-wide issues are conducted, they are posted to the site as well. Other services provided on the OIE web site include maintenance of two databases: one for documentation of strategic planning activities and the other for documentation of the institutional effectiveness process. Additionally, you may use the on-line data request form or email us at oieinfo@austin.cc.tx.us to ask for customized assistance or information. The address of the OIE web site is

http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub

—Roslyn Wallace
Institutional Outcomes Coordinator
Institutional Effectiveness

intranet data request form:	http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/oie/datareq.htm
web site address:	http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub
e-mail address:	oieinfo@austin.cc.tx.us

ACC EFFECTIVENESS
Review
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL.6 / ISSUE 2 / SPRING 2000

Assessment...Because Learning Matters Most

> *"Assessment is a rich conversation about student learning, informed by data."*
>
> *T. J. Marchese*

Assessment of student learning begins in the classroom. This is the setting in which, as the Latin root of the word assessment suggests, the teacher and student can sit beside each other to evaluate learning in a "conversation" that informs improvement. At the program level, a similar "conversation" occurs when faculty collaborate to identify, and then design assessment plans to evaluate, the critical learning outcomes students should be able to demonstrate as a result of completing the program. And finally, at the institutional level, the "conversation about student learning" occurs in the evaluation of the effectiveness of college-wide functions such as transfer and workforce programs, retention, student services, and developmental and adult education.

Common to all of these conversations is the belief that learning is what matters most to those of us in community college education. Because of this belief, we assess our effectiveness; we seek evidence of the degree to which learning is taking place and information to guide the steps we must take to improve.

The process by which we collect this evidence and information is our institutional effectiveness process:

1. Identify the purpose (of the class, program, institution, etc.)
2. Create Effectiveness Measures
    - the intended outcomes
    - the criteria
    - the methodology
3. Conduct assessment and analyze results.
4. Implement Improvements.

These steps are directly connected. Thus, the purpose is made concrete and specific through the identification of effectiveness measures for learning outcomes; the outcomes, in turn, are assessed; and improvements are implemented to enhance achievement of the purpose. Completing all these steps provides evidence of learning and information to guide improvement of what matters most to us—student learning.

—Roslyn Wallace
Institutional Outcomes Coordinator
Institutional Effectiveness

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ACC Effectiveness Review

In the following articles, several instructors share their experiences of "conversations about student learning" informed by Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), from the book of the same name by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross.

CAT's Meow

"Meow, meow," said Patches

"That's all you do, Patches, is cry, cry, and cry," I said. "What do you want? I fixed your food, opened the door, and even brushed you; and still you meow."

Does this sound like your class, are they never satisfied? At the start of each class there seem to be so many questions, all of which we covered the time before. Did I omit some material? Was the information clear, or should I have used a visual?

I needed input from experts, the students. So I wrote my first CAT, Classroom Assessment Technique, simple and to the point.

1. What was unclear about the section we covered?
2. What was the clearest point made about the same section?

Those were the two questions given to my class. I told them they would be helping me to learn to teach better, which would help them to learn the material. Long faces looked back at me. There was a pause, "There will be no names, no grades, and I will review the comments and get back to you." Long faces looked back again as I passed out the sheets with the two questions and left. Later I returned to pick-up the CAT. Wonderful, they all made comments; not all were the same, but with a little work they came together to form a picture of what was unclear and clear.

During the next class, I reviewed the material they had submitted. Surprise, there were now happy faces smiling back at me and positive comments later.

This experience was to play out twice more before the end of the semester. I, of course, changed the questions to fit the material covered on those days. The students were eager to fill me in on where I may have fallen short and thankful to have the missed information repeated.

My experience was a real eye opener and idea creator. How the lecture was delivered changed, and use of visuals and demos became more common. There was one unforeseen benefit: as the students became active and asked more questions, I became more at ease in front of the class.

CATs paid off for me; they can for you also. Try one, it's simple; I will even give you the questions. Give me a call, and see if the CAT's Meow can tell you something.

—David Tobey
Assistant Professor
Printing

BIO CATs

Teaching in ACC's biology and chemistry and now the biotechnology program has led to my association with some outstanding teachers and with the faculty development office. Last year, I told John Hastings I wanted to learn new ways to assess my students' learning during class, to get student feedback on whether I was doing a good job or not, and to help them discover the best ways for them to learn. He gave me the book *Classroom Assessment Techniques* by Angelo and Cross. This book contains numerous examples of classroom assessment techniques (CATs), and I would like to share with you several used by the

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group who is developing the biotechnology program.

In the book, CATs are divided into three categories: techniques for assessing course-related knowledge and skills (content); techniques for assessing learner attitudes, values and self-awareness; and finally techniques for assessing learner reactions to instruction. We use techniques in all categories, but for this article, we decided to give one example for each category and share how we use it in our class.

Alice Sessions is teaching BIO 1406 Cellular and Molecular Biology; she presents an example of category one. I am teaching BIT 1613 Introduction to Biotechnology; I give an example of the second category. Finally, D'Maris Allen is teaching BIO 2420; she presents an example of the last category.

1) Techniques for assessing course-related knowledge and skills: Content and Problem Solving - Isomers and Functional Groups

Cellular and Molecular Biology (BIO 1406) is a rigorous course for science majors that is designed to articulate with the University of Texas, Southwest Texas State University and other four-year colleges.

A strong working knowledge of chemistry is essential for success in this course. However, ACC teachers of Cellular and Molecular find that students have spotty backgrounds in chemistry. Some students took the course years ago, others at another institution. Sometimes, a fear of chemistry itself prevents students from understanding the subject or speaking up in class when they do not know something.

I resolved this difficulty by combining lecture with a variation on the CAT, "documented problem solutions," wherein student groups document the solving of problems, grade their work, and get immediate feedback on what they have just learned.

For example, I discuss isomers (structural, geometric and enantiomers) and functional groups as an introduction to macromolecules. After discussing isomers and functional groups, I hand out four questions and ask students to document the answering of the problems, in student groups of three or four, using the text book and their notes. The papers are collected and graded, with each member of the group given the group's grade. The questions emphasize higher level skills of analysis and synthesis and reinforce the skills just taught.

The following are representative of the questions asked of the groups:

1. Draw the 4 structural isomers (skeletons) of C_5H_{12} *(One is a ring; two are branched, one is unbranched)*

2. Draw and label the cis *and* trans *isomers of 2-butene,* $CH_3CH{=}CHCH_3$.

3. Serine is an amino acid. Look up serine in your text and draw it. Circle and identify the functional group(s).

Synthesizing information from problems 1-3:

4. Invent a molecule that contains 6 carbon atoms, a carbonyl group, a sulfydryl group and enough hydrogens so that every carbon has four bonds. It is your choice how the carbons are arranged and where the groups are attached.

The presence of the group allows for peer teaching by those who are better prepared in chemistry and relieves anxiety for all. When I used only handouts, overheads and other tools without immediate assessment, students frequently missed these questions on unit exams. However, when I added group work, documentation of the group's problem-solving technique, and immediate assessment, student comprehension and retention improved dramatically.

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2) Techniques for assessing learner attitudes, values, and self-awareness: Productive Study-Time Log - Studying for Tests

I use the productive study-time log CAT to find out and help my students find out if they studied productively for a test. The productive study-time log has students keep a record of how much time they spend studying for a particular test, when they study, and how productively they study at various times of the day or night.

The procedure for designing a log is to first determine what you want to track (e.g. time spent on task, how time was spent, times of the day, where they studied). Once you decide what to focus on, students create the simplest log sheet possible for recording the information. (I suggest you change the focus with each test, and that you try it out on yourself before you try it out on your students.)

The day I assign the log, I have a couple of examples for students to examine in class, and we discuss what they should include and what they should not include. I do not let them take the examples home. Students bring their logs every lecture period before the test, and I initial them, even if there are only blank spaces. This helps to prevent students filling in their logs the day they are due. The last thing I have them do is circle what they consider to be their most productive period of that day.

Logs are due the day of the test. I review them during the test, jotting down trends and figuring out total times. We review them as a group during the lecture period in which I return the tests to the class. Along with going over the test, we also go over how they *studied* for the test.

Be careful of your feedback as you do not want to be negative if the student did not spend the amount of time you felt they should (hard to believe, but not everyone shares your love of your subject or of learning). If you are negative, you probably will not get an honest response the next time you use this assessment technique. Try to report trends, etc. without bias, and let students draw their own conclusions. Students, because many of them are unaware of their study habits in terms of what works best for them, find the logs interesting.

An example of a productive study-time log is displayed below:

Date	Study Period (time)	Location	What did you do? Circle what you consider was the most productive period.
11/5	2:30 am to 4:00 am	Home	Read Textbook/wrote up practice test questions
11/5	2pm to 4pm	Oil change	Added more practice test questions
11/5	5:30pm-6:00pm	Home	Reviewed questions/ added some more questions

3) Techniques for assessing learner reactions to instruction: Reactions to Revamping a Class - BIOL 2420 Microbiology

CATs can also be used to determine students' feelings. Microbiology has been redesigned to include molecular techniques through inquiry based exercises in laboratory and create more diversity in lecture assessments. Thus, there is a new grading system for both lab and lecture. By using a CAT, I was able to get feedback on how students like the new labs and grading systems.

Similar questions were asked at different times to students in both lab and lecture sections. They were:

1. What do you think about the grading system for the course/lab?
2. What do you like best about the lecture/lab?
3. What would you like to change/do different?

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Because part of the CAT is to share feedback with students, I type a report and make a transparency of it, then spend class time discussing the results. (This can be part of your teaching portfolio.) The results from students in the lecture class indicate students like the grading scheme, like using CDs and worksheets for learning during the lecture period, and had a variety of improvement suggestions. I try to implement some of these suggestions so students know I value their input, such as using more discussions in covering the lecture materials.

Results from students in laboratory class showed more diversity of student feelings. The overwhelming majority liked the laboratory grading scheme and the basic organization and procedures in lab. However, some fine-tuning will be done before the course is offered again, based on the LAB CAT.

For example, I will try to re-sequence some of the activities as well as leave out several exercises in an effort to avert having students perform more than two laboratory exercises at the same time. I will also give more instruction on graphing, particularly using semi-log paper.

While CATs take some class time, it is time well spent in requesting and receiving feedback, which for the most part, is an honest reflection of students' feelings and opinions due to the nature of the assessment procedures. If you are interested in learning what students think about some things you do in your classroom, try it!

—D'Maris Allen, Professor, Biology
Linnea Fletcher, Professor, Biology
Alice Sessions, Project Coordinator, Biotechnology

Letting the CATs Out of the Bag

What probably frustrates teachers most is seeing their students unable to grasp the concepts, ideas, theories, formulas, knowledge being taught. Even the most effective teacher knows that different classes respond differently to course content. So much depends upon the students' backgrounds, biases, previous preparation; indeed, at times it seems as though the teacher can do little to break down the learning barriers which surround some students. Similarly, at times it appears that students magically grasp ideas so quickly that the teacher wasn't even a part of the process! Given these varied responses, how can a teacher gauge his or her own effectiveness to make certain that learning is actually taking place?

Many learning theories address this question. However, theories aren't really much help when it comes to a teacher facing daily a class which seems unable to learn course content. English teachers regularly face student writers who cannot, no matter how hard they try, develop writing ideas and maintain topic focus; math teachers work over and over with students who cannot master logical formulas; history teachers work with students who take copious notes during lecture and discussion but who can't pass the tests. As teachers for whom learning matters most, how can we tell how well our students are learning in time to help them learn better?

A recently developed hands-on method for assessing the effectiveness of teaching has made its way into the college classroom: the Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT). Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, the creators of CAT, summed up the general concept best in the first chapter of their book *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers,* (See Book Review, p. 7) "Classroom Assessment helps individual college teachers ob-

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tain useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning."

What's interesting about CAT is that it is based upon what many teachers already do in an informal way. That is, most faculty ascertain whether or not students are actually learning what they need to know. Certainly, one way to judge that is through tests. But gauging effective teaching and learning should be done before a test is given. For example, if a large majority of students in class fail an exam, the teacher usually steps back and evaluates both the exam and the in-class instruction to try and figure out why so many students failed. But, doing this *after* the exam is too late. Effective teachers try to assure student learning before the exam ever occurs. CAT does just that.

CAT has several important characteristics: it is learner-centered, teacher-directed, mutually beneficial, formative, context-specific, ongoing, and (most important of all) rooted in good teaching practice. Thus it allows each faculty member to continuously (and painlessly) assess just how much learning is occurring and why.

Although the CAT system is an efficient and easy-to-use technique, trying to explain the details of it in this limited space would be futile. In fact, the bulk of *Classroom Assessment Techniques* consists of various examples of assessment techniques being used in different disciplines. The concept builds upon what most teachers already know: that simply asking students at the end of class if they have any questions probably won't reveal whether or not learning is occurring.

However, some of the easiest CAT techniques take only a few words to discuss. The first is The Minute Paper. Using this classroom assessment technique, the teacher asks the students at the end of the class period to respond to only two questions: 1) What was the most important thing you learned today? 2) What questions remain uppermost in your mind as we conclude this class session?

By reading the short responses, the teacher can check to see if she is getting the main points across and can identify what still puzzles her students. As a result, she can manipulate how she is teaching what. When she discovers what most students thought was important, she can ask herself two things: Is what students see as important what I see as important? If there's a difference there, she can refocus her discussion during the next class period, making sure she emphasizes what she wants them to focus on. And she can ask herself why students still had questions about a topic she thought she clearly stressed. Do they need more fundamental review of the confusing point? Do they even have a sufficient foundation of knowledge to understand the fundamental point?

Another quick technique is called The Muddiest Point. With this approach, students are asked to briefly respond to this question: "What was the muddiest point in my lecture today?" Once the teacher knows what has remained muddy in her students' minds, she can re-think her teaching approach for that portion of material. Perhaps she'll want to use visuals rather than a verbal explanation. Perhaps she'll want to clarify the fuzzy point with group work activities.

Other short techniques are The One-Sentence Summary, Directed Paraphrasing, and Applications Cards. In addition to these quick effectiveness gauges, CAT offers ideas for longer, more complex yet highly effective teaching and learning assessments, such as the Memory Matrix.

The concept of teaching effectiveness is not new. Because faculty believe so deeply in the value of an education, they constantly work to make certain that their students are learning what they should and must know. As illustrated by the CAT

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system, measuring effectiveness does not have to be difficult. But, it will always be rewarding.

If you're interested in finding out more about, or getting help with, CATs, call the Faculty Instructional Development Office at 223-7667. We have copies of the CAT handbook to loan and there are workshops scheduled as well. Also check out the following web address:

http://www.siue.edu/~deder/assess/catmain.html

—Terry Stewart
Director, Teaching Excellence
Faculty Development Office

Book Review: Classroom Assessment Techniques

This book review is reprinted from the May, 1995 issue of the ACC Effectiveness Review with thanks to Betty Samford, NRSG who is no longer with the College.

The handbook, *Classroom Assessment Techniques,* by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, offers the college instructor a well written guide to data collection and evaluation to improve teaching effectiveness. The authors provide the reader with a blend of the philosophy, assumptions, and goals of classroom assessment with concrete and fun ways to utilize the techniques in the didactic setting.

The book is divided into four major parts:
1) ways to get started;
2)assessment techniques;
3) research findings and future considerations;
4) available resources.

Part one includes an introduction to the Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), instruction in forming specific teaching goals using the Teaching Goal Inventory (TGI), and a three-step process of how to begin assessment in the classroom. Twelve examples, ranging from astronomy to statistics, of previously used CATs are given to demonstrate how the techniques may be applied to a variety of disciplines.

Part two details ways to select the right technique and lists specific methods of assessing an assortment of cognitive and academic skills. For example, the "one sentence summary" technique can be used to assess a beginning nursing student's ability to understand and synthesize the concepts of the nursing process. There are also examples of how to assess critical thinking, learner values, attitudes, and study skills.

In part three, the authors discuss their findings regarding use of the TGI, CATs, and classroom research during a six-year period. They also address relevant ways to develop and approach classroom research using the goals and philosophy of the CATs.

Part four contains a copy of the TGI for the reader's self-assessment and a comparison of data between community colleges and four-year colleges using the TGI.

This book is an invaluable resource for the instructor interested in improving the quality of classroom teaching. It provides creative and non-threatening methods of assessing teacher effectiveness. The CATs are structured to be used by one faculty member or in a team teaching approach in a variety of disciplines.

—Betty Samford
Nursing

Classroom Assessment Techniques by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross is available from Jossey-Bass, San Francisco. (ISBN 1-55543-500-3)

Program Level Conversations about Student Learning

When you teach students in night classes, as we in the Legal Assistant Program do, the old saw that defines a professor as, "a person, who talks in your sleep," comes a little too close to home. The eternal questions arise, "Are the students getting what they need?" "How much are they getting out of these courses, and how do we find out?" "How could we do it better?" These are of course, the ultimate questions asked by any educator, and though a good educator may have an instinctive feel for some of the answers, instinct does not readily translate into information accessible to all those who are asking the questions. The same questions are being asked by taxpayers, accrediting agencies, and, government entities charged with overseeing education. Accountability is the buzzword and, though we can rail against the current attempts to quantify everything of value, that won't do us much good. Education is a main focus of the public's cry for accountability.

When the Legal Assistant Program was faced with the need to quantify how well it was doing its job of training paralegals, a number of approaches were considered; however, we realized early on that any evaluation would have to be based upon the goals and objectives of the Program. Put simply, the Legal Assistant Program's primary goal is to do the best possible job of preparing students to function as entry-level legal assistants/paralegals in a law firm or corporate/government law office. But how do we know if we're succeeding?

It took some time to realize that we didn't have to wait until the students graduated and took jobs in order to answer the question. One of the required courses in the Program is an internship. Since the internship is an opportunity for students to use in the "real world" what they learned in school, we don't allow students to take the internship until they have completed the bulk of their coursework. The obvious solution to our problem was to let the attorneys who employ the interns, evaluate their preparation to function as entry-level legal assistants. We were already having the attorney supervisors fill out an individual evaluation of each intern that included multiple questions about the intern's abilities. It was a very simple matter to add the following question: "Preparation to function as an entry level legal assistant" with a one to five ranking...one being "inadequate" and five being "superior." We then asked those who should know, how well we were preparing our students to function as legal assistants, on a one to five scale. Of course, we also gave the evaluator an opportunity to comment on any of the evaluation criteria so as to let us know why a particular part of the evaluation was very high or low.

We now have a tool that tells us, every fall and spring semester, how well we are preparing our students; and where a student is not well prepared, we have individual questions that identify the deficiencies to help us improve our training.

As an example, during a recent school year, over 80% of the interns evaluated were deemed to have received "superior" preparation to function as entry level legal assistants and the balance were deemed to have "very good" preparation. Out of the nine areas where specific skills were evaluated, the average score was 4.41 out of 5. There was, however, concern expressed about the limited training in legal research on CD ROM and on line sources such as Westlaw. As a result of that concern, the Legal Assistant Program initiated training in CD ROM legal research and followed that up with comprehensive training in legal research using Westlaw.

Obviously, an evaluation is only of use if it provides information about what is being done correctly, and what could be improved. Our intern evaluation is not foolproof. When a student doesn't put in the effort, the evaluation will reflect that lack of effort, but as educators, part of our job description is to motivate. A particular evaluation may be telling us that we need to focus on that part of our job.

—Duane Crowley
Professor and Program Coordinator
Legal Assistant Program
(see Legal Assistant Program assessment plan, opposite)

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires colleges it accredits to document their institutional effectiveness process. The ACC Unit-Level Institutional Effectiveness Database was designed to provide a centralized, web-based venue where all College units document their institutional effectiveness process. Each academic year, as units complete the steps in the institutional effectiveness process, information is entered into the database to provide a complete record of the unit's documentation, as required by SACS. Here is one assessment plan taken directly from the database. The Unit-Level Institutional Effectiveness Database resides on the ACCweb at http://salvador.austin.cc.tx.us/oiedb/intro.html

Assessment Plan: Legal Assistant Program

Academic Year 1997-98 Outcome #1: Job Preparation

Intended Outcome: Students graduating from the ACC Legal Assistant Program will be prepared to function as entry-level legal assistants or paralegals.

Assessment Criteria 1A: Students taking the Internship Course during their last or next-to-last semester of the Program will be evaluated by a potential employer as adequately prepared to function as an entry-level legal assistant.

Methodology: Employers of interns working in a law office or other legal environment are asked, at the end of the internship, to evaluate the intern's performance in nine different areas and to determine whether the intern is adequately "prepared to function as an entry-level legal assistant." The evaluation scale is 1 to 5, with 1 being "inadequate," 2 being "needs improvement," 3 being "adequate," 4 being "very good," and 5 being "superior."

Summary and Analysis of Data 1A: During the 1997-98 school year, a total of thirteen students successfully completed an internship course. The students' supervisors evaluated the students' performance in nine different areas and also evaluated the students' "preparation to function as an entry-level legal assistant." In the area of "preparation to function as an entry-level legal assistant," three interns were given "4s" and the rest were given "5s." In the nine substantive areas, with 117 possible evaluations (13 students, 9 questions) there were 8 "N/As," 4 "3s," 40 "4s," and 65 "5s" awarded.

Improvement Actions 1A: In the future we will add two questions to the evaluation in order to better determine what factors may have contributed to the four "3s" awarded to students. Since the "3s" were not concentrated in any single area, we need to see if other factors are affecting the result. We will ask for an evaluation of work ethic and attitude.

Assessment Criteria 1B: Less than 5% of the graduates of the Program will return to ACC to seek re-training in an area in which they completed a course with a grade of "C" or better.

Methodology 1B: Records of any graduates seeking retraining are kept.

Summary and Analysis of Data 1B: No students requested retraining.

Improvement Actions 1B: None

Institutional Level Conversations about Student Learning

At the institutional level, the conversation about student learning takes place within the context of college-wide functions. Effectiveness measures for these functions provide evidence of the degree to which the outcomes promised in the institution's mission statement are being achieved. According to its mission statement, ACC provides vocational and technical programs leading to degrees, certificates, and jobs; freshman and sophomore courses in the arts and sciences; continuing adult education; compensatory education programs (developmental education courses and adult basic education); and assistance to students to help them achieve their educational goals. The Effectiveness Measures for these functions are presented here. Most were defined by the President's Effectiveness Council, composed primarily of faculty. However, some still in "draft" status are currently under discussion in several College Councils.

Each year, data defined in the methodology are collected, analyzed, and the results presented in the OIE publication, Effectiveness Update, as well as posted to the OIE web site (http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub). Additionally, as the data are made available, the measures themselves may be revised to provide more useful information for these college-wide conversations about student learning.

Workforce Education Effectiveness Measures

Purpose: To prepare students for employment in industry and business.

Intended Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Methodology
1. Students in workforce education programs will meet their educational goals.		
1A. Associate degree seekers	Analysis of student data will indicate that [of] workforce students who indicate their educational objective at entry is to "Complete an associate's degree," 10% will complete a degree within 6 years. Of those who do not complete a degree, 50% will achieve a certificate or marketable skills achievement award.	Longitudinal analysis of student intent data and program/course completion data.
1B. Certificate seekers	Analysis of student data will indicate that [of] workforce students who indicate their educational objective at entry is to "Complete a certificate," 10% will do so within 6 years. Of those who do not complete a certificate, 50% will achieve a degree or marketable skills achievement award.	Longitudinal analysis of student intent data and program/course completion data.
1C. Non-graduates	Analysis of student data will indicate that 90% of non-degree seeking students who are identified as Marketable Skills Achievers and complete at least six semester credit hours in a workforce program will have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 when they leave ACC.	Non-degree seeking students are those students who indicate on the initial application that (1) their educational objective at time of entry is "Take selected courses" and (2) their primary reason for attending ACC is "To improve skill for my present job" or "To prepare for a future job immediately after attending ACC."
2. Graduates from workforce programs will find employment in jobs related to their fields of study.		
2A. Associate Degree recipients	Within one year of graduation, 85% of AAS degree recipients will be employed in a job that is directly or closely related to their field of study, or will be continuing their education.	Annual surveys of graduates within one year of graduation and THECB data (as available).
2B. Certificate recipients	Within one year of graduation, 65% of certificate recipients will be employed in a job that indirectly or closely related to their field of study or will be continuing their education.	Annual surveys of graduates within one year of graduation, and THECB data (as available).

President's Effectiveness Council approved 1/12/98

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Academic Programs Transfer Effectiveness Measures

Purpose: To prepare students for successful college or university Transfer

Intended Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Methodology
1. Transfer Rate		
1A. First-time in College (FTIC) students who have earned at least 15 credit hours in baccalaureate transfer courses will transfer to a four-year college or university within four years of their initial enrollment.	ACC's transfer rate for FTIC students with a declared major in a transfer program will be higher than the state average transfer rate.	Comparison of ACC and statewide FTIC transfer rates as published in the THECB *Community College Transfer Rate Study*.
1B. Minority FTIC students who have earned at least 15 credit hours in baccalaureate transfer courses will transfer to a four-year college or university within four years of their initial enrollment.	ACC's transfer rate for minority FTIC students with a declared major in a transfer program will be higher than the state average transfer rate.	Comparison of ACC and statewide FTIC transfer rates as published in the THECB *Community College Transfer Rate Study*.
2. Transfer Intent Fulfillment		
2A. First-time students who indicate an intent to transfer and who have earned at least 15 credit hours in baccalaureate transfer courses will transfer to a four-year college or university within six years of their initial enrollment.	65% of first-time students who indicate an intent to transfer and who have earned at least 15 credit hours in baccalaureate transfer courses will transfer to a four-year college or university within six years.	Longitudinal analysis of student intent data collected from student applications. (First report Fall 2000)
2B. Minority first-time students who indicate an intent to transfer and who have earned at least 15 credit hours in baccalaureate transfer courses will transfer to a four-year college or university within six years of their initial enrollment.	65% of minority first-time students who indicate an intent to transfer and who have earned at least 15 credit hours in baccalaureate transfer courses will transfer to a four-year college or university within six years.	Longitudinal analysis of student intent data collected from student applications. (First report Fall 2000)
3. Success at the Transfer Institution		
3A. ACC Students who transfer will be in good academic standing at the transfer institution.	70% or more of ACC transfer students will be in good academic standing at the transfer institution.	Analysis of transfer data from transfer institutions including UT at Austin, SWTSU, and TAMU.
3B. ACC students who transfer will earn GPAs comparable to other transfer students at the transfer institution.	The average GPA of ACC transfer students and other transfer students at principal transfer institutions will not be significantly different.	Analysis of transfer data from transfer institutions including UT at Austin, SWTSU, and TAMU.

President's Effectiveness Council approved 10/5/98

Developmental Education Effectiveness Measures

Purpose: To provide campus-wide programs and services that assist academically under-prepared students so that they will meet their educational goals.

Intended Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Methodology
1. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rates		
1.A1 First-Time in College (FTIC) degree seeking students enrolled at ACC in the fall semester who are required to take developmental courses will return the following spring semester (Fall-to-Spring Retention).	Based on data provided by the THECB, the percentage of FTIC degree-seeking students enrolled in developmental education courses in the fall semester who return the following spring semester will not be significantly different from the percentage of students who were not enrolled in developmental education courses who returned in the Spring.	Using THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare the re-enrollment rates of students taking developmental courses with the rate of those who are not.
1.A2 First-Time in College (FTIC) degree seeking students enrolled at ACC in the fall semester who are required to take developmental courses will return the following spring semester (Fall-to-Spring Retention).	Based on data provided by the THECB, the percentage of FTIC degree-seeking students enrolled in developmental education courses in the fall semester who return the following spring semester will not be significantly different from the state average for students enrolled in developmental education courses.	Using THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Spring retention rates.
1.B There will be no significant differences by demographic group between Fall-to-Spring retention rates for FTIC degree or certificate seeking students enrolled in developmental education courses and those NOT enrolled in developmental education courses.	Based on data from the THECB Annual Data Profile, for each demographic group, the Fall-to-Spring return rate for FTIC students enrolled in developmental education courses will be within ±5% of the Fall-to-Spring return rate for students NOT enrolled in developmental education courses	Using data from the THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare developmental and non-developmental students' average Fall-to-Spring retention rates by demographic group.
2. Program Completion Rates		
2.A Students who are required to be enrolled in Developmental Education Courses at ACC will complete state-mandated requirements..	Based on data provided by the THECB annually, the percentage of ACC students enrolled in developmental education courses who complete state-mandated requirements will be at or above the completion rates for those students statewide.	Using THECB data for LBB measures, compare ACC and statewide percentages.
2.B Students who are required to enroll in developmental courses will complete their developmental requirements.	Baseline data will be collected to determine the rates of completion for the following groups of students required to enroll in developmental courses: those required to take developmental courses in one area, those required to take developmental courses in two areas, and those required to take developmental courses in three areas.	Using data from the student database, compare original proficiency levels to last proficiency levels (below "5" indicates requires developmental courses; "5" or higher indicates completed developmental requirements) for each area by "group" (developmental courses required in one, two or three areas).
2.C There will be no significant differences between developmental program completion rates by demographic group.	Based on data from the student database, the differences in developmental requirements completion rates among demographic groups will be within ±5%.	Using data from the student database, compare original proficiency levels to last proficiency levels ((below "5" indicates requires developmental courses; "5" or higher indicates completed developmental requirements) for each area by "group" (developmental courses required in one, two or three areas) and by ethnicity.

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(Continued from page 12)

3. Course Completion Rates		
3. Students who are required to be placed in developmental courses will complete their courses at rates similar to those taking credit courses.	Based on data from the student database, course completion rates (the percentage of students earning a grade of "C" or better) for developmental courses will be within ±5% of course completion rates for credit courses.	Using internally generated reports, compare the average course completion rate for developmental courses with that of credit courses.
4. Developmental to Credit Migration Rates		
4.A1 Students who successfully complete Developmental Writing will be successful in the next credit-level English course.	Based on data from the student database, at least 75% of students who complete Writing Skills II with a grade of "C" or better and then take English Composition I within two years, will complete English Composition I with a grade of "C" or better.	Each semester identify cohorts of students who complete Writing Skills II with a grade of "C" or better, starting in Fall 1997. Each semester thereafter, track the cohort enrollment in English Composition I. Calculate the percentage of those who complete English Composition I with a grade of "C" or better within two years of their completion of Writing Skills II.
4A.2 Students who successfully complete Developmental Writing will be successful in the next credit-level English course.	Based on data from the student database, students who complete Writing Skills II with a grade of "C" or better and then take English Composition I or English Composition II within two years will have average course grades within ±0.3 grade points of the average course grades for all students taking these courses who were not required to take developmental writing.	Each semester identify cohorts of students who complete Writing Skills II with a grade of "C" or better, starting in Fall 1997. Each semester thereafter, track the cohort enrollment in English Composition I and II. Compare the course grades for these students with the course grades for students taking English Composition I and II who did not take Writing Skills II.
4.B1 Students who successfully complete Developmental Reading will be successful in the next credit-level course.	Based on data from the student database, at least 75% of students who complete Reading Skills II with a grade of "C" or better and then take a course designated to meet TASP guidelines within two years will complete the credit-level course with a grade of "C" or better.	Each semester identify cohorts of students who complete Reading Skills II with a grade of "C" or better, starting in Fall 1997. Each semester thereafter, track the cohort enrollment in credit-level courses designated to meet TASP guidelines. Calculate the percentage of those who complete these courses with a grade of "C" or better within two years of their completion of Reading Skills II.
4.B2 Students who successfully complete Developmental Reading will be successful in the next credit-level course.	Based on data from the student database, average course grades of students who complete Reading Skills II with a grade of "C" or better and then take a course designated to meet TASP guidelines within two years will be within ±0.3 grade points of the average course grades for all students taking these courses.	Each semester identify cohorts of students who complete Reading Skills II with a grade of "C" or better, starting in Fall 1997. Each semester thereafter, track the cohort enrollment in courses designated to meet TASP guidelines. Compare the course grades for these students with the course grades for students taking these courses who did not take Reading Skills II.
4.C1 Students who successfully complete Developmental Mathematics will be successful in the next credit-level math course.	Based on data from the student database, at least 75% of students who complete Intermediate Algebra with a grade of "C" or better and then take College Algebra, Trigonometry, or Topics in Mathematics within two years will complete the credit-level course with a grade of "C" or better.	Each semester identify cohorts of students who complete Intermediate Algebra with a grade of "C" or better, starting in Fall 1997. Each semester thereafter, track the cohort enrollment in College Algebra or Trigonometry or Topics in Mathematics. Calculate the percentage of those who complete these courses with a grade of "C" or better within two years of their completion of Intermediate Algebra.
4.C2 Students who successfully complete Developmental Mathematics will be successful in the next credit-level math course.	Based on data from the student database, average course grades of students who complete Intermediate Algebra with a grade of "C" or better and then take College Algebra, Trigonometry, or Topics in Mathematics within two years will be within ±0.3 grade points of the average course grades for all students taking these courses.	Each semester identify cohorts of students who complete Intermediate Algebra with a grade of "C" or better, starting in Fall 1997. Each semester thereafter, track the cohort enrollment in College Algebra, Trigonometry, or Topics in Mathematics. Compare the course grades for these students with the course grades for students taking these courses who did not take Intermediate Algebra.

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Adult Education Effectiveness Measures

Purpose: To improve educational opportunities for adults who lack the level of literacy skills requisite to effective citizenship and productive employment.

Intended Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Methodology
1. Completion Rate: Adults who need basic education skills necessary for literacy functioning will complete the literacy program.		
1.1. Beginning Literacy-ABE students will complete beginning level adult basic education courses.	15% of Beginning Literacy-ABE students will advance to intermediate level ABE courses.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Beginning Literacy-ABE students who advance to the intermediate level of adult basic education courses.
1.2. Beginning Literacy-ESL students will complete beginning level adult basic education courses.	17% of Beginning Literacy-ESL students will advance to intermediate level ABE courses.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Beginning Literacy-ESL students who advance to the intermediate level of adult basic education courses.
1.3 Beginning ABE students will complete beginning level adult basic education courses.	20% of Beginning ABE students will advance to intermediate level ABE courses.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Beginning ABE students who advance to the intermediate level of adult basic education courses.
1.4 Beginning ESL students will complete beginning level adult basic education courses.	22% of Beginning ESL students will advance to intermediate level ABE courses.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Beginning ESL students who advance to the intermediate level of adult basic education courses.
2. Completion Rate: Adults who complete intermediate basic education will have sufficient basic education to enable them to benefit from job training and retraining programs and obtain productive employment.		
2.1 Intermediate ABE students will complete intermediate level adult basic education courses.	23% of Intermediate ABE students will advance to advanced level ABE courses.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Intermediate ABE students who advance to the advanced level of adult basic education courses.
2.2 Intermediate ESL students will complete intermediate level adult basic education courses.	23% of Intermediate ESL students will advance to advanced level ABE courses.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Intermediate ESL students who advance to the advanced level of adult basic education courses.
3. Completion Rate: Adults who desire to continue their education will advance to at least the level of completion of secondary school.		
3.1. Advanced ABE students will obtain a GED.	30% of Advanced ABE students will obtain a GED.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Advanced ABE students who obtain a GED.
3.2. Advanced ESL students will meet completion standards set by ACC's college-wide ESL Task Force.	24% of Advanced ESL students will meet completion standards set by ACC's college-wide ESL Task Force.	Using data reported to the state, calculate the percent of all Advanced ESL students who meet completion standards set by ACC's college-wide ESL Task Force.
4. Access		
4.1. Student enrollments in ABE classes will meet target numbers.	Enrollments in ABE classes will be within 5% of the target set in the grant for each level of instruction.	Using data reported to the state, compare actual enrollments in each level of instruction with target enrollments defined in the grant.
4.2. Students enrolled in ABE classes will meet eligibility criteria.	100% of students enrolled in ABE classes will meet state eligibility criteria.	Using data reported to the state, calculate percentage of students enrolled in ABE classes who meet state criteria.
4.3. Students who take ABE classes will complete the initial 12 hours of class.	80% of all students enrolled in ABE classes at ACC will complete the initial 12 hours of class.	Using data reported to the state,calculate the percent of all students enrolled in ABE classes who complete the initial 12 hours of class.

President's Effectiveness Council approved 5/3/99

Student Services Effectiveness Measures

Purpose: To provide exemplary programs that support the teaching/learning process and to increase opportunities for students to define and reach their educational goals.

Intended Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Methodology
1. Enrollment		
The unduplicated headcount enrollment of ACC will reflect the diversity of the college age population the College serves.	The percent of ACC students from each demographic group will be within ±5% of their proportion in the service area college age population.	Compare THECB demographic data on the service area population and the fall unduplicated headcount enrollment of ACC students.
2. Applicants		
The applicants who register and attend ACC will reflect the demographics of the applicant pool.	At least 75% of each demographic group represented in the applicant pool will actually enroll.	Compare demographic data from the yearly applicant pool and the annual enrollment of first time at ACC students.
3. Financial Aid		
ACC will provide financial aid opportunities to students who demonstrate the most need.	At least 50% of the students who receive Pell Grants will have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of zero (0).	Analysis of data from the Federal Pell Grant Program *Student Payment Summary*.
4. Loan Default Rate		
The college will maintain a loan default rate 5% below the maximum threshold required by law.	The College's loan default rate, as calculated by the Default Management Division of the Department of Education, will be at least 5% less than the federally defined maximum threshold.	Analysis of data from the Department of Education's Default Management Division's *Annual Report* to ACC.

President's Effectiveness Council approved 2/1/99

Retention Effectiveness Measures

Purpose: To provide consistent, campus-wide programs and services that increase the likelihood that students will remain in college and complete their degree or certificate program.

Intended Outcome	Assessment Criteria	Methodology
1. Fall-to-Spring Retention Rates		
1A. First-Time in College (FTIC) degree seeking students enrolled at ACC in the fall semester will return the following spring semester (Fall-to-Spring Retention).	The percentage of FTIC degree seeking students enrolled in the fall semester who return the following spring semester will be higher than the state average.	Using THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Spring retention rates.
1B. There will be no significant differences between ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Spring retention rates for FTIC degree or certificate seeking students by demographic group.	For each demographic group, the percent of FTIC students enrolled in the fall semester who return the following spring semester will be within ±5% of their proportion statewide.	Using data from the THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Spring retention rates by demographic group.
2. Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates		
2A. Students enrolled at ACC in the fall semester will return the following fall semester (Fall-to-Fall Retention).	The percentage of ACC students enrolled in the fall semester who return the following fall semester will be higher than the state average.	Using THECB *Student Migration* report, compare ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Fall retention rates.
2B. There will be no significant differences between ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Fall retention rates by demographic group.	For each demographic group, the percent of ACC students enrolled in the fall semester who return the following fall semester will be within ±5% of their proportion statewide.	Using data from the THECB *Student Migration* report, compare ACC and statewide average Fall-to-Fall retention rates by demographic group.
3. Completion Rates		
3A. FTIC degree or certificate-seeking students will complete their degree or certificate within three years.	Three-year completion rates of FTIC degree-seeking students will be at least 5% above the state average.	Using data from the THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare ACC and statewide average completion rates.
3B. There will be no significant differences between ACC and statewide degree or certificate completion rates of FTIC students by demographic group.	For each demographic group, the percent of FTIC students who complete a degree or certificate will be within ±5% of their proportion statewide.	Using data from the THECB *Annual Data Profile* report, compare ACC and statewide completion rates by demographic group.

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Assessment vs. Grades

Assessment	Grades
Formative	Summative
Diagnostic	Final
Non-Judgmental	Evaluative
Private	Administrative
Often Anonymous	Identified
Partial	Integrative
Specific	Holistic
Mainly Subtext	Mostly Text
Suggestive	Rigorous
Usually Goal-Directed	Usually Content-Driven

Annotations

- *Formative* refers to the formation of a concept or item whereas summative refers to an "adding-up" or summary stage. Assessments usually occur in mid-progress when corrections can be made. Grades are usually recorded at the end of a project or class in order to summarize academic quality.
- Assessment is *non-judgmental* in the sense that it focuses on learning, which is the outcome of many influences, including teaching style, student motivation, time on task, study intensity, and background knowledge. Therefore, no one element can be reasonably singled out for praise or blame for a particular learning outcome. In contrast, grades carry *evaluative* weight as to the worthiness of student achievement and are applied, for good or ill, directly to them.
- Assessments tend to be used in *private* and become public only under the assessor's control. Grades, while not truly public, are part of the *administrative* record available throughout an educational institution.
- Assessments are almost always collected in *anonymous* fashion and the results are released in the aggregate. Grades are *identified* with specific students.
- To use a metaphor from calculus, assessment more resembles a *partial* derivative whereas grades are more recognizable as an *integrative* process.
- Assessment tends to look at *specific* parts of the learning environment. Grades are *holistic* in the sense that they record academic achievement for a whole project. Final grades, of course, can reduce academic achievement for an entire semester to a single mark.
- The *text* of a course is its disciplinary content; grades tend to focus on that. The *subtext* of a course involves the transferable baccalaureate skills, such as critical
- thinking, creative thinking, writing, and analysis. For example, the "text" of a course in anatomy and physiology includes the names bones and functions of muscles. The "subtext" of such a course might include scientific thinking, problem solving, and memory improvement. Grades tend to focus on text; assessment tends to emphasize subtext.
- Assessment findings tend to be *suggestive* and have pedagogical significance. That is, assessment findings shift pedagogy for reasons that need not be justified statistically, but can be justified when even one student learns better. In contrast, grades are recorded in a *rigorous* manner that does have statistical significance.
- As with text and subtext mentioned above, grades tend to reflect student control of disciplinary course *content* whereas assessment usually aims at the *goals* for all baccalaureate students, such as synthetic thinking and esthetic appreciation.

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ACC EFFECTIVENESS

Review

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL.7 / ISSUE 1 / FALL 2000

Employee Satisfaction with Services of Highly Used College-wide Offices

> *"All offices need to focus on customer service."*
>
> Anonymous respondent

To provide the College with information to enhance its ability to meet the needs of its employees, an Employee Satisfaction Survey was administered in Spring 2000. The results of this survey were analyzed to determine which offices of the College were best meeting employee expectations and which were perceived as being less responsive. All offices were provided with a detailed analysis of their data and will develop plans to address the concerns expressed by ACC employees. This report will be limited to findings for "highly used" (80 or more respondents requested or received services) College-wide offices/services.

Survey Development and Administration

The Spring 2000 Employee Satisfaction Survey was based on a form that had been developed and administered in 1996. In Fall 1999, it was modified to reflect the then current organization of the college and reviewed and approved by the Executive Vice Presidents and the Employee Association Presidents. (PLEASE NOTE: the College organization has changed since the form was developed. However, all discussion and analyses are based on the organization of the College in Fall 1999 when the form was developed.)

The survey form was divided into two main sections covering College-wide services and Campus-specific services. The College-wide services included 63 offices organized by administrative area; Campus-specific services included 29 campus-based offices. For each office, respondents were given an opportunity to indicate if they had requested or received services during the past year. They then rated the Promptness, Quality, Attitude and Overall Service of the offices with which they were familiar. A space for comments was provided.

In March 2000, the questionnaire was mailed to 2,903 ACC employees. It was mailed to home addresses to ensure that those without campus mailboxes would receive it. The employee address lists were provided by Human Resources and included all Full-time and Adjunct faculty, as well as all Professional/Technical, Classified, and Administrative employees. In addition, the form was sent to a randomly selected sample of 306 hourly employees and 392 Continuing Education and Adult Education Faculty.

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Results

The overall return rate was 15.4% (447 returned questionnaires), but rates varied greatly by employee group. The highest return rate was 42.9% of the 28 administrators. About one-fourth of the Full-time Faculty and Professional/Technical staff returned the questionnaire. One-fifth of the classified staff responded. The Hourly and Continuing Education/Adult Education faculty had the lowest return rates, 2.9% and 1.3% respectively. The forms were scanned into a data file and data were aggregated by office for each question.

Response rates for individual offices varied. Many offices did not have high numbers of respondents. The number of respondents requesting or receiving services ranged from a high of 280 for the Payroll office to a low of 10 for the Government Relations Office. The mid-point for all offices was 79 (17.7%) of the total 447 respondents. At least 80 respondents reported using services of 30 of the 63 College-wide offices listed on the questionnaire. For purposes of this report, these offices are referred to as "highly used."

A number of comments expressed concern about the survey instrument—that it was overly long and cumbersome. As one respondent commented, *"This survey is 'too busy' to complete in a 'few minutes'."* Another indicated, *"This survey was too long. Next time ask only about 10 ques-*

(Continued on page 3)

Table 1: Ratings for Overall Service of Highly-used College-wide Offices/Services

College-wide Offices/Services	Total=447		dissatisfied		neutral		satisfied	
	n	%	%	n	%	n	%	n
Payroll Office	280	62.6	34.6	97	23.6	66	41.8	117
Computer Help Desk (223-HELP)	253	56.6	26.1	66	21.7	55	52.2	132
Employee Benefits Office	196	43.8	25.5	50	22.4	44	52.0	102
ACCNet Services	193	43.2	21.8	42	24.4	47	53.9	104
Staff Development Office	181	40.5	19.3	35	16.6	30	64.1	116
Admissions and Records Office	180	40.3	20.0	36	17.8	32	62.2	112
Bursar's Office (HBC)	170	38.0	25.3	43	21.2	36	53.5	91
Office of Faculty Development	168	37.6	14.9	25	20.8	35	64.3	108
Maintenance (Repairs)	156	34.9	19.2	30	13.5	21	67.3	105
Employment Services	150	33.6	46.0	69	20.0	30	34.0	51
Telephone Services	149	33.3	16.1	24	17.4	26	66.4	99
Personnel Records Office	149	33.3	34.2	51	17.4	26	48.3	72
Office of the AVP for Human Resources	145	32.4	36.6	53	20.7	30	42.8	62
Purchasing Office	140	31.3	26.4	37	19.3	27	54.3	76
Accounts Payable Services	139	31.1	23.0	32	22.3	31	54.7	76
Central Warehouse Services	130	29.1	11.5	15	15.4	20	73.1	95
General stores/Inventory Services	105	23.5	13.3	14	14.3	15	72.4	76
Employee Compensation Office	104	23.3	45.2	47	16.3	17	38.5	40
Office of the VP for Business Services	103	23.0	42.7	44	18.4	19	38.8	40
Office of the Dean of Arts & Humanities	102	22.8	26.5	27	15.7	16	57.8	59
Office of the AVP for Information Technology	97	21.7	16.5	16	23.7	23	59.8	58
IT Systems Support	96	21.5	19.8	19	17.7	17	62.5	60
Office of the Dean of Math & Science	95	21.3	21.1	20	12.6	12	66.3	63
HBC Room Scheduling	91	20.4	16.5	15	19.8	18	63.7	58
Financial Aid Office	87	19.5	10.3	9	13.8	12	75.9	66
Office of the EVP for Admin., Institutional Advance. & Com. Relations	83	18.6	33.7	28	27.7	23	38.6	32
Office of the Dean of Soc. & Behavioral Sciences	82	18.3	22.0	18	6.1	5	72.0	59
Workforce Training & Cont Education Office	82	18.3	14.6	12	31.7	26	53.7	44
Physical Plant	80	17.9	18.8	15	22.5	18	58.8	47
Office of the AVP, Institutional Effectiveness	80	17.9	26.3	21	17.5	14	56.3	45

(Continued from page 2)

tions." Thus, the length of the survey may have adversely affected the response rate. Other comments suggested that some respondents were not familiar with the offices listed: *"The design of this questionnaire is poor at best. There should have been some kind of explanation of what each office was responsible for. I don't believe that most employees know these departments 'official' name."* This may have impacted response rates for individual offices.

In the following analysis, results for the College-wide services are based on all respondents who indicated that they had requested or received the services of a specific office during the past year. Level of use is an important factor in analyzing employee satisfaction. If it can be assumed that offices that are used more have greater impact on employee satisfaction, then the College needs to focus its analysis on these offices. In the discussion that follows, all tables list College-wide offices/services in descending order of the number of respondents who reported they used the services of that office. Additionally, all percentages are of the total "user" responses to that item. And finally, responses of "satisfied" and "very satisfied" were aggregated into a single "satisfied" rating, as were responses of "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied."

Satisfaction with Overall Service

Table 1 (page 2) displays the percentages of respondents who indicated they were satisfied, neutral, or dissatisfied with the overall service provided by highly used offices. Of the highly used offices, the ones with the highest levels of satisfaction—at least 70% of respondents reporting they were satisfied with overall service—included Financial Aid Office (75.9%), Central Warehouse Services (73.1%), General Stores/Inventory Services (72.4%), and the Office of the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences (72.0%). Of course 70% satisfaction is an arbitrary standard; however, best practices would indicate that this standard is the minimum acceptable if quality service is a goal of the office.

Dissatisfaction

To determine where the College needs to focus efforts on improving its services, levels of dissatisfaction must be analyzed. Again, referring to Table 1, of 30 highly used offices, 18 are of special concern because over 20% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the services provided during the past year. The services of these offices warrant self-study and more detailed analysis.

Respondents reported the highest levels of dissatisfaction with Overall Service of Employment Services (46.0%), Employee Compensation Office (45.2%), and the Office of the VP of Business Services (42.7%). For each of these offices, a greater percentage of respondents were dissatisfied with the overall services they requested or received than were satisfied.

The discussion thus far has focused only on responses for Overall Service. To assist in developing

(Continued on page 4)

Table 2: Comparison of Dissatisfaction with Promptness and Overall Service of Highly Used College-wide Offices/Services

College-wide Office/Service	Percent Dissatisfied		
	Promptness	Overall Service	Difference
Payroll Office	35.1	34.6	0.5
Computer Help Desk (223-HELP)	33.5	26.1	7.4
Employee Benefits Office	33.8	25.5	8.3
ACCNet Services	28.6	21.8	6.8
Staff Development Office	21.4	19.3	2.1
Admissions and Records Office	22.4	20.0	2.4
Bursar's Office (HBC)	27.5	25.3	2.2
Office of Faculty Development	19.0	14.9	4.1
Maintenance (Repairs)	21.7	19.2	2.5
Employment Services	49.0	46.0	3.0
Telephone Services	22.7	16.1	6.6
Personnel Records Office	40.0	34.2	5.8
Office of the AVP for Human Resources	37.6	36.6	1.0
Purchasing Office	28.1	26.4	1.7
Accounts Payable Services	28.3	23.0	5.3
Central Warehouse Services	13.0	11.5	1.5
General stores/Inventory Services	12.4	13.3	-0.9
Employee Compensation Office	44.4	45.2	-0.8
Office of the VP for Business Services	41.3	42.7	-1.4
Office of the Dean of Arts & Humanities	30.1	26.5	3.6
Office of the AVP for Information Technology	19.4	16.5	2.9
IT Systems Support	24.8	19.8	5.0
Office of the Dean of Math & Science	21.2	21.1	0.1
HBC Room Scheduling	17.4	16.5	0.9
Financial Aid Office	14.0	10.3	3.7
Office of the EVP for Admin., Institutional Advance. & Com. Relations	36.5	33.7	2.8
Office of the Dean of Soc. & Behavioral Sciences	20.2	22.0	-1.8
Workforce Training & Cont Education Office	18.3	14.6	3.7
Physical Plant	23.8	18.8	5.0
Office of the AVP, Institutional Effectiveness	29.1	26.3	2.8

(Continued from page 3)

an additional set of information, three dimensions of service were also rated: Promptness, Quality of Service, and Service Attitude. Trends in these dimensions may assist areas in developing plans to improve their effectiveness in meeting employee needs.

In general, respondents were more dissatisfied with Promptness than with Overall Service. As Table 2 (page 3) shows, for 20 (66.7%) of the 30 highly used offices, at least two percent more respondents were dissatisfied with Promptness than with Overall Service. While Promptness tends to be problematic for most areas, it is clearly an issue for several offices where at least five percent more respondents were dissatisfied with Promptness than with Overall Service. These include: Employee Benefits Office (8.3% difference), Computer Help Desk (7.4% difference), ACC Net Services (6.8% difference), Telephone Services (6.6% difference), Personnel Records (5.8% difference), Accounts Payable (5.3% difference), and IT Systems Support and Physical Plant (5.0% difference, each).

On the other hand, dissatisfaction with Service Attitude and Quality of Service tended to track with dissatisfaction with Overall Service (Table 3, below).

(Continued on page 5)

Table 3: Comparison of Dissatisfaction with Quality or Attitude to Dissatisfaction with Overall Service of Highly Used College-wide Offices/Services

College-wide Offices/Services	Dissatisfaction: Quality of Service		Dissatisfaction: Service Attitude		Dissatisfaction: Overall Service
	%	difference	%	difference	%
Payroll Office	34.0	-0.6	32.9	-1.8	34.6
Computer Help Desk (223-HELP)	24.2	-1.9	22.0	-4.0	26.1
Employee Benefits Office	28.6	3.1	23.9	-1.7	25.5
ACCNet Services	23.0	1.2	19.6	-2.2	21.8
Staff Development Office	20.8	1.4	18.0	-1.3	19.3
Admissions and Records Office	21.7	1.7	17.8	-2.2	20.0
Bursar's Office (HBC)	25.0	-0.3	27.2	1.9	25.3
Office of Faculty Development	14.8	-0.1	15.0	0.1	14.9
Maintenance (Repairs)	19.9	0.6	17.3	-1.9	19.2
Employment Services	46.1	0.1	39.9	-6.1	46.0
Telephone Services	16.0	-0.1	15.5	-0.6	16.1
Personnel Records Office	30.0	-4.2	32.5	-1.8	34.2
Office of the AVP for Human Resources	36.4	-0.2	31.3	-5.3	36.6
Purchasing Office	26.1	-0.4	21.1	-5.3	26.4
Accounts Payable Services	23.0	0.0	17.3	-5.8	23.0
Central Warehouse Services	10.9	-0.7	12.5	1.0	11.5
General stores/Inventory Services	12.4	-1.0	15.2	1.9	13.3
Employee Compensation Office	43.7	-1.5	36.3	-8.9	45.2
Office of the VP for Business Services	39.8	-2.9	38.8	-3.9	42.7
Office of the Dean of Arts & Humanities	27.7	1.3	23.5	-2.9	26.5
Office of the AVP for Information Technology	17.3	0.9	15.3	-1.2	16.5
IT Systems Support	22.0	2.2	20.0	0.2	19.8
Office of the Dean of Math & Science	21.9	0.8	21.9	0.8	21.1
HBC Room Scheduling	16.5	0.0	18.7	2.2	16.5
Financial Aid Office	11.6	1.3	10.5	0.1	10.3
Office of the EVP for Admin., Institutional Advance. & Com. Relations	32.1	-1.6	32.9	-0.8	33.7
Office of the Dean of Soc. & Behav. Sci.	20.5	-1.5	22.9	0.9	22.0
Workforce Training & Cont Educ Office	16.0	1.4	18.3	3.7	14.6
Physical Plant	17.7	-1.0	16.7	-2.1	18.8
Office of the AVP, Institutional Effectiveness	22.5	-3.8	21.3	-5.0	26.3

(Continued from page 4)

Differences between dissatisfaction with Overall service and either dissatisfaction with Service Attitude or Quality of Services were less than two percentage points for most of the highly used College-wide Offices/Services. Exceptions were noted only for dissatisfaction with Service Attitude of the Workforce Training and Continuing Education Office (3.7% difference) and with Quality of Service of the Employee Benefits Office (3.1% difference).

Employee Group Trends

For purposes of this analysis, employees were grouped into three categories: Full-time Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, and Non-faculty. Ratings of Overall Service provided by highly used offices are summarized in Table 4 (below) by each of these categories.

Ratings varied by employee category. For example, while about half (51.7%) of Full-time faculty respondents were dissatisfied with the Overall Service of the Payroll Office, over half (56.5%) of Adjunct faculty respondents were satisfied with the Overall Service of this office.

Full-Time Faculty: A greater percentage of Full-time faculty were dissatisfied than were satisfied

(Continued on page 6)

Table 4: Ratings for "Overall Service" of Highly-used College-wide Offices/Services by Employee Category

NOTE 1: Adjunct Faculty includes Continuing Education and Adult Education Faculty. Non-faculty includes Administrators, Professional-Technical Staff, Classified Staff, and Hourly Staff. NOTE 2: "n" indicates the number of respondents.
NOTE 3: "D" indicates dissatisfied, "N" indicates neutral, "S" indicates satisfied.

College-wide Offices/Services	Full-time Faculty				Adjunct Faculty				Non-faculty			
	n	%D	%N	%S	n	%D	%N	%S	n	%D	%N	%S
Payroll Office	60	51.7	25.0	23.3	69	20.3	23.2	56.5	129	33.3	24.0	42.6
Computer Help Desk (223-HELP)	72	34.7	29.2	36.1	39	33.3	15.4	51.3	118	18.6	17.8	63.6
Employee Benefits Office	52	32.7	15.4	51.9	20	25.0	45.0	30.0	109	21.1	21.1	57.8
ACCNet Services	45	40.0	26.7	33.3	31	35.5	16.1	48.4	105	14.3	22.9	62.9
Staff Development Office	38	28.9	18.4	52.6	39	10.3	23.1	66.7	83	20.5	12.0	67.5
Admissions and Records Office	48	27.1	6.3	66.7	23	13.0	17.4	69.6	94	17.0	20.2	62.8
Bursar's Office (HBC)	26	23.1	26.9	50.0	28	32.1	7.1	60.7	102	24.5	21.6	53.9
Office of Faculty Development	60	21.7	20.0	58.3	54	11.1	24.1	64.8	43	9.3	20.9	69.8
Maintenance (Repairs)	38	28.9	13.2	57.9	13	38.5	23.1	38.5	92	9.8	13.0	77.2
Employment Services	41	65.9	17.1	17.1	26	42.3	19.2	38.5	71	35.2	22.5	42.3
Personnel Records Office	32	53.1	12.5	34.4	22	27.3	18.2	54.5	81	23.5	19.8	56.8
Telephone Services	31	35.5	35.5	29.0	12	16.7	33.3	50.0	85	7.1	12.9	80.0
Office of the AVP for Human Resources	41	51.2	24.4	24.4	22	31.8	27.3	40.9	73	28.8	17.8	53.4
Purchasing Office	35	42.9	11.4	45.7	3	100.0			89	16.9	22.5	60.7
Accounts Payable Services	28	46.4	17.9	35.7	9	33.3	11.1	55.6	89	13.5	25.8	60.7
Central Warehouse Services	23	13.0	13.0	73.9	2			100.0	93	8.6	17.2	74.2
General stores/Inventory Services	16	12.5	6.3	81.3	6	50.0		50.0	71	8.5	16.9	74.6
Employee Compensation Office	27	59.3	7.4	33.3	18	44.4	11.1	44.4	49	32.7	20.4	46.9
Office of the VP for Business Services	34	61.8	17.6	20.6	6	16.7	66.7	16.7	55	32.7	20.0	47.3
Office of the Dean of Arts & Humanities	31	41.9	12.9	45.2	17	17.6	5.9	76.5	45	24.4	17.8	57.8
Office of the AVP for Information Technology	26	23.1	26.9	50.0	7	42.9	28.6	28.6	57	10.5	22.8	66.7
IT Systems Support	19	31.6	21.1	47.4	5	20.0	20.0	60.0	64	14.1	21.9	64.1
Office of the Dean of Math & Science	23	43.5	8.7	47.8	18	22.2		77.8	45	13.3	20.0	66.7
HBC Room Scheduling	27	14.8	18.5	66.7	6	33.3	16.7	50.0	50	10.0	22.0	68.0
Financial Aid Office	21	23.8	14.3	61.9	1			100.0	58	6.9	13.8	79.3
Office of the EVP for Administration, Institutional Advancement & Community Relations	22	63.6	22.7	13.6	11	36.4	27.3	36.4	43	20.9	30.2	48.8
Office of the Dean of Soc. & Behav. Sci.	25	28.0	4.0	68.0	13	15.4	7.7	76.9	34	23.5	8.8	67.6
Workforce Training & Cont Educ Office	18	16.7	33.3	50.0	10	20.0	40.0	40.0	47	10.6	25.5	63.8
Office of the AVP Institutional Effectiveness	33	30.3	12.1	57.6	7	42.9		57.1	33	18.2	27.3	54.5
Physical Plant	16	37.5	31.3	31.3	6	33.3	16.7	50.0	49	10.2	16.3	73.5

(Continued from page 5)

with Overall Service of 11 (36.7%) highly used College-wide offices/services, while for 18 (60.0%) of these offices, a greater percentage were satisfied than dissatisfied. For one office/service (Computer Help Desk), Full-time faculty were equally (within 2.0%) satisfied as dissatisfied. Full-time faculty were most dissatisfied with Employment Services (65.9%), the Office of the EVP for Administration (63.6%), the Office of the VP for Business Services (61.8%), Employee Compensation Office (59.3%), Personnel Records Office (53.1%), Payroll Office (51.7%), and the Office of the AVP for Human Resources (51.2%). They were most satisfied with General Stores/ Inventory (81.3) and Central Warehouse Services (73.9%).

Adjunct faculty generally had lower levels of use than other groups. These respondents tended to be more satisfied than dissatisfied with the Overall Service of most (22 or 73.3%) College-wide offices/ services. However, a greater percentage were dissatisfied than satisfied with the Overall Service of three (10.0%) college-wide offices/services. For five offices/services (16.6%) about an equal percentage (within 2%) of Adjunct faculty were satisfied as were dissatisfied with Overall Service. Adjunct faculty's highest levels of dissatisfaction were with the Employee Compensation Office (44.4%), Office of the AVP for Information Technology (42.9%), Office of the AVP for Institutional Effectiveness (42.9%), and Employment Services (42.3%).

Non-faculty tended to be less dissatisfied in general than faculty groups. In fact, for all offices, a greater percentage of Non-faculty expressed satisfaction with Overall Service than expressed dissatisfaction. Non-faculty respondents' highest levels of dissatisfaction were reported for Overall Service of Employment Services (35.2%), the Payroll Office (33.3%), Employee Compensation Office (32.7%) and the Office of the VP for Business Services (32.7%).

Non-faculty were most satisfied with Overall Services of Telephone Services (80.0%), Financial Aid Office (79.3%), Maintenance/Repairs (77.2%), General Stores/Inventory Services (74.6%), Central Warehouse Services (74.2%), and Physical Plant (73.5%).

Comments

Written comments were made by a number of respondents. Most comments focused on areas relating to customer service. Several mentioned customer service specifically:

> *"All offices need to focus on customer service."*
>
> *"There are many departments at ACC that need customer service training. They also need to realize that we are each other's customers. Sometimes I am saddened by the way some people treat co-workers and students."*
>
> *"However, my overall impression is that all units lack a sense of urgency. Services are provided when ACC employee speed permits."*
>
> *"...employees are rude..."*

Dissatisfaction with customer service was also reflected in comments about contacting offices. Many respondents referred specifically to difficulties related to the use of telephones:

> *"I rated several offices dissatisfied because whenever I call them I can never get anyone to answer the phone and I am usually trying to help someone at that time. I think voicemail is overused."*
>
> *"An observation: when calling offices for service, there is a tendency on the part of clerk or office workers not to answer the telephone. The automatic answering machine does most of the phone answering."*
>
> *"My biggest complaint w/HBC is their reliance on voicemail. It is very hard to get hold of a 'live' person. Since adjuncts share offices and hold varied office hours, we can be hard to reach."*

On the other hand, some respondents were more positive:

> *"I am very, very excited to see the results of this. The majority of these services have improved a great deal in the past 6 mo!"*
>
> *"I have seen an improved, helpful attitude from several offices at HBC (this was not the case last year)."*
>
> *"I love ACC; I love teaching there and also enjoy taking classes."*

—Martha Oburn, AVP
Institutional Effectiveness

Using Rubrics to Assess Effectiveness

Rubric is an odd term. Miriam defines it as "an authoritative rule" and "something under which a thing is classed." It has come to mean some set of uniform criteria applied for the purpose of evaluation. For years teachers have applied rubrics, whether they used the term or not, to student work. "Your research paper must have a (1) cover sheet with the following information, (2) clear introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs, (3) at least 10 sources, 7 of which must be print, (4) and at least 15 footnotes," an English or History or Science teacher might say. Often a checklist is provided for the student to show which items were included, which missing. These are rubrics.

An on-line search shows rubrics used for hundreds of purposes, from assessing web pages to multimedia presentations, from oral reports to science labs, from research papers to teachers' lesson plans. There are even rubrics to assess rubrics.

Origin of Our Assessment: The ACC English Department began using rubrics to assess our students in Composition I and II classes several years ago as we were required to implement program evaluation. We identified purposes for our classes, set goals to determine if we were doing what we wanted in the classes, then measured whether we had reached the goals. With measurement we began applying rubrics.

Origin of the Rubrics: How did we develop the rubrics we use? We identified content standards, deciding what we wanted to see in the Composition I and II exit exams. For example, the best papers (5 points) include "rich content, varied sentence structure, an appropriate tone, clear and appropriate organization, very few and not serious mechanical errors, an opening that draws in the reader, a conclusion that summarizes and highlights the main points, an overall impression that the reader has been taught sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph." Fair papers (3 points) include "content which does not require too many clarifications, occasionally varied and effective sentences, introductory paragraphs which provide generally clear main points, few serious mechanical errors." The worst papers (1 point) include "frequent and serious mechanical errors, evidence of scanty or no proofreading, only rudimentary organization, little content."

Process: Once each fall and spring semester, a number of English faculty meet on a Saturday morning (coffee and sweet rolls help us remain inspired) to assess 100 "C" tests from Composition I and 100 from Composition II. Our syllabi are not as standardized as they once were but they still have some uniformity of requirements. The "C" tests, however, have the same format and requirements for all students in these classes and are usually administered in the testing centers. We consider these as exit exams because the students must have completed all required papers to this point and then complete the "C" test in order to pass the class. They write additional papers for higher grades.

We gather tests from all campuses and from as many different teachers as possible. We score only "C" tests which have been accepted by the instructor; that is, the students taking these tests have all passed the course with at least a "C."

In the evaluation session, before reading the tests, we review the rubrics and read and discuss a couple of sample papers. We consider this a recalibration. Most of us have done this before, but we need to remind ourselves, to be sure we are on the same track. Once we get to the actual papers for evaluation, each is read twice. The first reader evaluates the paper and marks it with a number (1 – 5) and covers the score so the second reader will not be influenced. After the second reading, the scores are compared. If they are no more than one score apart (reader one gave the paper a 4, reader two gave it a 3), the numbers are added and the paper is completed. If the two scores are farther apart than one point, a third reader evaluates the paper. The two higher scores are added. A combined score of 6 or higher is passing. Last April, 14 of us evaluated the 200 papers in about two hours.

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Recent Results: The department's goal is to pass 70% of these tests with a 6 or higher. Remember that all of the tests we read already have been passed by our English instructors. This spring we passed 69% of the Composition I tests (compared to 75% in 1999, 65% in 1998). We passed 79% of the Composition II tests (73% in 1999, 63% in 1998).

What We Do After: We realize that our being able to apply the rubrics and passing only 63 – 79% of the exit exams which have been 100% passed by others isn't good enough. We need to address the inconsistency. Over the past several years, partly as a result of our assessment sessions, we have refined the syllabi and the "C" tests. We have reviewed all and changed some of the textbooks. We are working on identifying benchmark papers so we can distribute examples of what the department has agreed are typical of "A," "B," "C," and "F" papers.

We believe that applying the rubrics helps us in determining what we need to do. The rubrics help establish a baseline. While it can be adjusted by changing the rubrics as we need to, the baseline establishes clear criteria against which performance can be measured. The criteria are therefore less vague and the performance evaluations are more objective.

—David Lydic, Professor
English Department

Unit-level Effectiveness Database Assessment Plan: English

Academic Year: 1998-99
Outcome Title: Composition II

Intended Outcome: Students completing Composition II should be able to write a coherent essay of literary analysis identifying the elements of narrative fiction, using the appropriate methods of organization, and observing grammatical, mechanical, and stylistic conventions.

Assessment Criteria: Through a process of collaborative holistic grading, 70% of Composition II students evaluated will have their final essays accepted.

Methodology: Using English Task Force designed rubric, evaluate a sample of. 100 Composition II "C" tests from all campuses and from as many different teachers as possible

Summary and Analysis of Data

Results: Results were similar to last year. Once again, the department's 70% goal was not reached. Approximately 65% of the exams in Composition I and II were passed with a combined score of 6; 10% of the exams required a third reader.

Improvement Actions: The Communications Task Force has now begun the revision process for the Composition II syllabus. Faculty suggestions have been solicited, and a draft of the new syllabus should be forthcoming in Spring 1999. The Communications Task Force has begun review and selection of new stories and essays for the Composition II C tests with the goal of bringing the testing materials more closely into line with the goals of the courses. This should be completed by Fall 1998. The Communications Task Force continues to review the criteria for the holistic evaluation process. Holistic evaluation will of course continue, and the results will be distributed to all English faculty.

Using Pre and Post Tests to Assess Effectiveness

Origin.

After the last (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) visit ACC was directed to adopt institutional effectiveness measures, both college-wide and at the unit level. The Government department began by asking themselves what it was that they were trying to teach. They then asked how well they were teaching it.

What do we teach?

The Government Department began discussions regarding the common elements of both the United States Government and the Texas State and Local Government courses. In other words, what were those things that all Government instructors could agree that all students should know when they successfully passed the course. This proved to be an arduous task. Agreement was quickly reached on a number of learning objectives, but others were more difficult. It also proved to be one thing to agree that all students should know "something" about the separation of powers for example, quite another to try to reach agreement on what that "something" should be. The concepts, terms, etc., that were agreed on were then made into learning objectives.

How well are we teaching it?

The learning objectives are distributed to all faculty with the admonition that they are expected to teach them. The number of learning objectives have in the past been limited so that instructors would still have time to teach some topics of their own choosing and also allow for emphasis on a particular area or areas. Each Fall semester, approximately 30 sections are randomly selected to participate in both pre and post tests of the learning objectives. It is also communicated to faculty that if one or more of their sections are chosen, then they are expected to administer the test and return them to the Task Force.

What are the results?

The tests have demonstrated that students are achieving the learning objectives for the most part. Of course, some of the objectives have better success rates than others, but all in all, they do well. One somewhat puzzling aspect has been that there is often not a great deal of difference in success between pre-tests and post-tests. The reasons for this are not clear. It could be that we are teaching students what they already know, to some extent, but we are re-enforcing it and broadening that knowledge.

The same sections are not given both the pre and post test, reducing the validity of the test. The Task Force discussed at length whether an attempt should be made to pre and post test the same sections. However, pre and post tests are best when they are administered to the same students. Due to withdrawals, absences, etc., testing the same sections would not necessarily result in the same individuals being tested both pre and post. The tests would also probably be skewed by the tendency for the better students to be left in a class at the end. As a result of these considerations both pre and post test sections have been randomly selected.

Due to the logistical and validity problems associated with pre and post testing the Government Task Force has assessed their assessment. In the Fall a common test will be administered by all faculty at the end of the semester incorporating a set of revised learning objectives for both United States Government and Texas State and Local Government. The tests will be required of all sections, but how it is incorporated into the course is up to the instructor. In other words, the test could be part of a comprehensive final or a separate test, for example. It could be something that students study for or that they are surprised with. This methodology may raise more validity issues. Those findings would be part of next year's report.

The process of assessment is not easy. As demonstrated above the Government Task Force has spent considerable time and energy attempting to assess their effectiveness. While the results may be less than ideal, the process itself has been worthwhile for at least two reasons. One, the debate over common learning objectives has made all of us who teach Government rethink what we think is important for students to know. Secondly, it has made us keenly aware of the fact that it is not enough to merely give out information. We must also make sure that the information is processed and internalized. These lessons are applicable to any discipline.

—Rex Peebles, Professor
Government Department

Unit-level Effectiveness Database Assessment Plan: Government

Academic Year: 1998-99
Outcome Title: Knowledge of Basic Concepts and Processes

Intended Outcome: Students who have completed a government course will possess a knowledge of the basic concepts and processes of politics and government.

Assessment Criteria: A sample of students in randomly-selected government sections, including both required courses (GOV 2613 and GOV 2623) will take a pretest and a post-test which covers 30 central concepts and processes in politics and government. The students will answer at least 70 percent of the questions correctly and will improve one standard deviation (SD) from the pretest mean.

Methodology: Tests will be administered during the fall semester, with a randomly-selected sample being tested during the first week of the semester and a randomly-selected sample being tested during the last week of the semester.

Summary and Analysis of Data

Results: Tests were administered in the Fall 1998 semester and were analyzed during the Spring 1999 semester. Government Assessment Results 1999 Assessment Results The scores on the post-test did not met the Task Force's standards in terms of average or in terms of one standard deviation improvement. As the scores on the post-test demonstrate, the students who completed the courses were unable to average 70 percent correct answers in either course. Although students in GOV 2613 came closer to the 70 percent average stipulated by the Government Task Force than students in GOV 2623, they also began the course with a higher average on the pretest and presumably, more knowledge about the subject matter. Furthermore, students who completed the courses did not achieve an average score that was one standard deviation above the average of the students who had started the course. In addition to the descriptive statistics, two tests of samples were performed on the data: a Student's t-test and a Wilcoxon rank sum test or z-test. These statistical tests indicate whether statistically significant differences exist between the results of the two sets of scores (pretests and post-tests). Although both tests yield valid results in large samples, the Wilcoxon rank sum test is more appropriate for the data because its assumptions are less stringent. In both tests, the null hypothesis that there was no difference in the means was rejected. The results were significant at the .01 level of confidence . These tests indicate that the differences between the pretest results and the post-test results were significant statistically. Although the students' scores did not achieve the Task Force's stipulated means, there were significant changes in the knowledge of the students after the completion of the courses.

Improvement Actions: The Task Force developed more specific learning objectives for the key concepts for each course, GOV 2613 and GOV 2623, which will be included in the Government Instructors' Manual to be distributed during the summer of 1999. Instructors are encouraged to distribute the learning objectives to their students and emphasize them in their teaching.

Using Test Pilot to Assess Effectiveness

This year the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) conducted its annual stakeholder evaluation online. *Test Pilot* software by ClearLearning, purchased by the College for use by faculty and staff, made the survey process easier, quicker, less expensive, and even enjoyable! It also improved our response rate over last year's "mail-out" survey.

Surveys, when carefully designed, are a useful tool for gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. However, they are also very time consuming. To get from the first discussion of "what do we want to know" to the final report of "this is what we found out" usually takes at least six months. Most of this time is spent printing and distributing the questionnaires, then waiting for them to be returned, and finally transforming the responses into data that can be analyzed. *Test Pilot* shortens this time.

Last year, for our "mail-out" evaluation survey, we created questionnaire items that would give us information we needed to measure the effectiveness of the key missions of our office. This year, refining those items based on the analysis of data provided by the 1999 evaluation, we created a *Test Pilot* questionnaire to be deployed (distributed) "on line" via email. That is to say, we sent an email message to all our stakeholders requesting they "click" on the link provided and complete the survey questionnaire on their browser.

We started receiving responses immediately after the email went out; by the next morning we had already received 86 responses; by the end of the second day, we had received 172 responses—53 more than the *total* number of responses we received to the 1999 "mail-out" evaluation!

Submitted responses were *automatically* transformed into data that were entered into a table that I (as the "test owner") could access on the web or download into an Excel spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics for each item were calculated instantly and automatically, allowing us to see, at any point in time, the frequency and percentage of responses as well as the number of times a question was "offered" and not answered, the median value chosen, the mean of the responses and the standard deviation. Reporting results to staff was as easy as printing the "Test Statistical Analysis."

The software is easy to use with "on-line" help that guides the author through the process of setting the "look and feel" of the survey (background color and style, headers and footers, text formatting and editing defaults), question design (yes/no, true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, check all that apply, matching, Likert scale), and setting up security options.

The security options are a key feature. As author of the assessment, an owner identification and password allow you to access response data. You can limit respondent access to the assessment via a list of "users" you include with the file, either by entering them individually, if there are only a few, to importing them from an Excel spreadsheet. You can limit access to the assessment by time or by the number of submissions made by a single user. You can restrict access by computer—that is by identification of specific computers that have access to the assessment. More security options than probably anyone would need for conducting a survey.

Once you have "authored" the assessment and it is ready for distribution, the file is uploaded to a web server and instantly ready for your respondents — perhaps graduates of your program, or their employers; or in the case of non-instructional units, your stakeholders/customers.

For information on using Test Pilot to assess effectiveness in your area, contact me in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

—Roslyn Wallace, Coordinator
Institutional Assessment

Q&A

Defining effectiveness in terms of "How well did we do?" (results) rather than "What will we do?" (process) can present challenges to both instructional and non-instructional units. But if gathering data for improvement is the reason for assessing effectiveness, this challenge must be addressed; the distinction must be made; and the indicators of effectiveness must be defined in terms of outcomes that identify intended results. In the following Q&A, Dr. Karen Nichols, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness Associates, addresses this issue.

Q: How Does Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness Relate to the Strategic Planning Already Taking Place on Many Campuses?

On many campuses both strategic planning and institutional effectiveness or assessment planning are conducted. They are necessary and often required by regional accrediting associations. However, they are different in their approach to planning and it is vitally important that institutions recognize and respect the different purposes which each serves (see Figure 3).

Strategic planning on campuses is frequently a product of presidential leadership or the requirements of the governing board. Regional accrediting associations also often require some form of strategic planning activity. Such planning focuses upon the question, "What actions should we take to implement the Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose?" As such, strategic planning often results in a series of action plans (these are frequently long range) with resource requirements to put into action the necessary *processes* to accomplish the statement of purpose. Strategic planning is characterized by:

- Administrative planning
- Fiscal planning
- Physical facilities planning
- Budget planning

In AES [Administrative and Educational Support] units, such administrative planning often focuses on the *means* through which to improve processes or make the unit's operations more *efficient*. These administrative planning efforts often include cross training of staff, improving communications with other administrative offices, and implementation of improved record-keeping activities. It is only after these administrative planning activities have been accomplished and are part of the services provided by the unit, that they are subject to assessment regarding the extent to which they are effective in providing services to the unit's clients which is the *end* result sought.

Strategic planning takes place in order for an institution to survive and/or go about its development and refinement. A number of institutions have assumed that since strategic planning was being well accomplished on the campus, then institutional effectiveness was also being accomplished. The negative findings regarding effectiveness planning by regional accrediting association reaffirmation visitation committees resulting from this assumption have been a shock to many of these institutions.

Institutional effectiveness planning also relates to the statement of purpose for the institution. However, it asks the basic question, "How well are our students learning and administrative (AES) services functioning?" Thus institutional effectiveness planning is very ends or outcomes oriented and focuses upon the results of the institution's efforts (as opposed

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to the efforts or processes implemented) as measured by services provided by AES units and student learning in instructional programs. Institutional effectiveness planning is characterized by:

- Expected results (administrative objectives)
- Means of assessment
- Actual assessment results
- The use of results to improve services

Q: If We're Doing Strategic Planning, Isn't That Enough?

Both strategic planning and institutional effectiveness planning are necessary for a campus to be in compliance with most regional accreditation requirements. The danger is that, because of the prior existence of strategic planning activities, institutions often do not implement institutional effectiveness planning activities until after being scourged by their regional accrediting association.

Certainly, the strategic action plans resulting from administrative and educational support unit administrative planning may cause an increase in requests for provision of resources with which to offer services (personnel, better equipment, office supplies, etc.) being requested or provided. However, if an institution attempts to "assess" the accomplishment of its strategic action plans, it determines:

- Were the personnel provided?
- Was the equipment purchased?
- Were there enough office supplies?
- Was the new form implemented?

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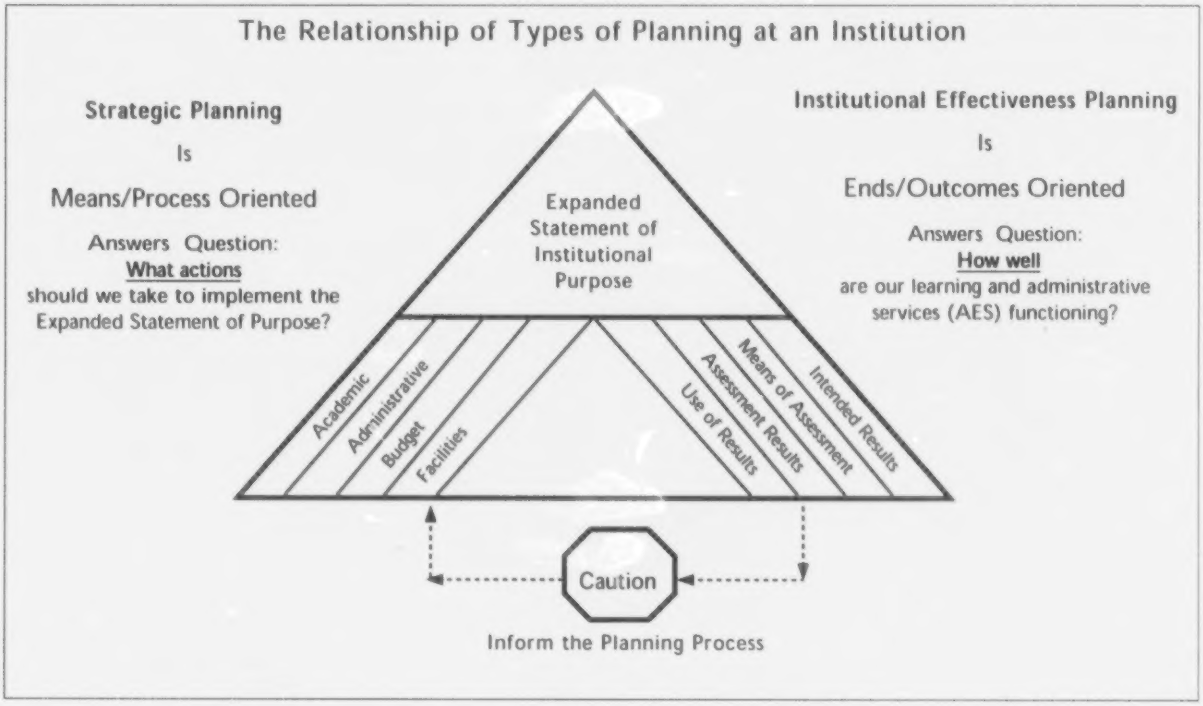

The Relationship of Types of Planning at an Institution
Strategic Planning
Is
Means/Process Oriented
Answers Question:
What actions
should we take to implement the Expanded Statement of Purpose?
Institutional Effectiveness Planning
Is
Ends/Outcomes Oriented
Answers Question:
How well
are our learning and administrative services (AES) functioning?
Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose
Academic
Administrative
Budget
Facilities
Intended Results
Means of Assessment
Assessment Results
Use of Results
Caution
Inform the Planning Process

Figure 3

From *The Department Head's Guide to Assessment Implementation in Administrative and Educational Support (AES) Units* by Karen W. Nichols and James O. Nichols

(Continued from page 13)

This focus is altogether insufficient and differs from the institutional effectiveness or ends focused assessment of the *results* of these activities or:

- Measures of increased client satisfaction
- Direct measures of increased levels of service
- Validation of services by external reviews
- Ability of the client after receiving service

Units' strategic action or administrative plans include descriptions of services which the unit believes will be improved as a result of changes in an AES unit process. These administrative planning activities such as "implementing an on-line transcript service" or "designing an improved inventory check list" are found on the left side (strategic planning side) of the triangle shown in Figure 3. When the unit is preparing administrative objectives for institutional effectiveness (found on the right side of the triangle shown in Figure 3), seldom do they include such administrative planning initiatives describing processes to be improved.

While many of the regional accrediting associations support the use of assessment results in institutional planning and budgeting, in the authors' opinion, if assessment activities are identified widely on the campus as the means through which to justify or drive budget requests, the use of these assessment results for service improvement will substantially diminish. However, from a conceptual standpoint, use of assessment results to impact resource allocation and budgeting is very attractive. From a practical standpoint, it undermines the process of program or service improvement in several ways. First, if assessment results are seen primarily as justification for the request of additional resources, then the absence of additional resources will be widely utilized as a reason for not making service improvements. Under these circumstances, many AES units will never stop to consider what improvements could be made within existing unit resources, but will move directly to requests for additional resources which in many institutions stand little chance of funding. Second, in some AES units the means of assessment and criteria for success will be crafted in such a way as to justify a request for additional resources rather than improve services. Third, both of the previously described circumstances will lead rapidly toward staff consideration of assessment as a means through which to "play the game," rather than genuinely improve services offered. AES units are urgent to exercise caution in the use of assessment results as a justification for requesting additional resources. Rather, AES units need to first ask, "Given the personnel and resources we currently have, how can our unit improve its services?"

So, the answer to the question is simply, if you're doing strategic planning which results in unit action plans, etc., that is probably not sufficient to meet requirements concerning institutional effectiveness and the improvement of services by educational and support units.

—Karen W. Nichols, Executive Director
Institutional Effectiveness Associates

This article was excerpted from The Department Head's Guide to Assessment Implementation in Administrative and Educational Support Units with the generous permission of the author. Copies of the book are available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Graduate Outcomes — Workforce Detail

To determine whether graduates of public community colleges in Texas are employed, or continuing their education, or both, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) uses state employment records and various THECB data to locate students following graduation. However, these data may overlook self-employed graduates and graduates who have transferred to private or out-of-state schools. Additionally, the employment records do not indicate whether the graduate is employed in the field for which the degree or certificate was granted.

Each year, ACC surveys its graduates of the previous academic year to provide data that supplement the THECB's tracking data.

The ACC 1997-98 Graduate Survey was distributed during the Spring of 1999 to 1,033 graduates for the 1997-98 academic year. A total of 454 (44%) questionnaires were returned. Not all respondents answered every question in the survey.

Graduates were asked to respond to questions about:

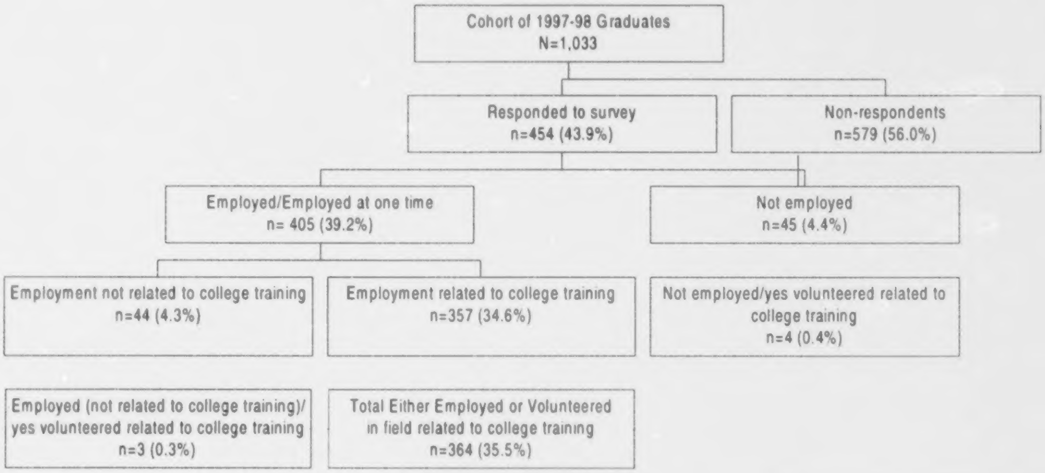
- employment status after graduation
- whether their degree or certificate was required for their job
- any further education beyond their ACC work
- any volunteer work involving ACC training
- their opinion of how well ACC prepared them for employment or further education

The chart below illustrates of the 1,033 graduates, 405 (39.2%) are or were at one time after graduating employed. Of those, 357 graduates (34.1%) were employed in a job that was related to their ACC training. Additionally, seven graduates (0.6%) volunteered in an area related to their ACC training even though they did not use their training in a job.

Most (370) of the graduates responding to the survey (445) rated their ACC preparation for employment or further education "excellent" (46.5%) or "satisfactory" (35.0%).

Please rate how well you feel ACC prepared you for employment or further education. My

	Respondents	
	N	%
Excellent	211	46.5
Satisfactory	159	35.0
Good only in some areas	60	13.2
Fair	7	1.5
Inadequate	8	1.8
Did not respond	9	2.0



Follow-Up Survey Results: 1997-98 Graduates

(Note: all percentages are of the total number of 1997-98 graduates.)

Cohort of 1997-98 Graduates
N=1,033
Responded to survey
n=454 (43.9%)
Non-respondents
n=579 (56.0%)
Employed/Employed at one time
n= 405 (39.2%)
Not employed
n=45 (4.4%)
Employment not related to college training
n=44 (4.3%)
Employment related to college training
n=357 (34.6%)
Not employed/yes volunteered related to college training
n=4 (0.4%)
Employed (not related to college training)/ yes volunteered related to college training
n=3 (0.3%)
Total Either Employed or Volunteered in field related to college training
n=364 (35.5%)

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Unit-Level Effectiveness Documentation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires colleges it accredits to document their institutional effectiveness process. The ACC Unit-Level Effectiveness Database was designed to provide a centralized web-based venue where all College units document their institutional effectiveness process. At scheduled times throughout the academic year, as units complete the steps in the effectiveness process, information should be entered into the database to provide a complete record of the unit's documentation, as required by SACS.

Documentation Schedule:

The unit enters its purpose statement into the database only once, unless it changes. For each effectiveness "loop", it enters outcomes information at three other times to complete documentation of its institutional effectiveness process.

What the unit enters:	When the unit enters information into the database:
Unit Purpose Statement	Once for all academic years (unless it changes)
Outcome Assessment Plan	Fall semester of the current academic year
Summary and Analysis of Data	Summer semester of the current academic Year
Impact Statement	Summer of the following academic year

Currently, units should be entering the **Summary and Analysis of Data** for each of the 1999-2000 outcomes they have assessed, the unit's **Impact Statement** for improvements they made in 1998-99, and the **Outcomes** they will assess in 2000-01. If you have any questions regarding what to enter, or how to enter it, contact
Roslyn Wallace (223-7585 or rwall@austin.cc.tx.us).

The database resides at http://salvador.austin.cc.tx.us/oiedb/intro.html

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ACC EFFECTIVENESS

Review

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL. 7 / ISSUE 2 / SPRING 2001

ULEAD--Assessing the Effectiveness of Effectiveness Assessment

The ultimate goal of effectiveness assessment is to pose questions and gather information for improvement.

Background

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires the institutions it accredits to demonstrate the effectiveness of their educational programs. *The Criteria for Accreditation*, Section III, Institutional Effectiveness, 3.1 Planning and Evaluation: Educational Programs states,

*"the institution **must***
1. *Establish a clearly defined purpose appropriate to collegiate education*
2. *Formulate educational goals consistent with the institution's purpose*
3. *Develop and implement procedures to evaluate the extent to which these educational goals are being achieved, and*
4. *Use the results of these evaluations to improve educational programs, services, and operations."*

ACC's effectiveness assessment process is guided by the answers to five critical questions:

1. Why does this unit exist?
2. What is the unit trying to accomplish?
3. Did the unit succeed?
4. What changes must be made?
5. What difference did the changes make?

These questions provide the framework for assessing whether the unit is "on track" or needs realignment of its processes. Answering these questions completes the five steps for designing and implementing an effectiveness assessment plan that yields specific information from which decisions may be made to improve the quality of student learning.

Documenting effectiveness assessment plans serves three purposes: to demonstrate the College is meeting SACS requirements, to provide a record of individual units' efforts to improve the quality of their programs, and to provide data for examining program trends.

In Fall 1996, instructional units documented their effectiveness assessment plans on paper forms. The plans were included in the report sent to SACS that year. The following year, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness created the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database (ULEAD) on the ACC Intranet to provide a centralized web-based venue where all College units would document their effectiveness assessment process.

This article reviews the Effectiveness Assessment process at ACC and summarizes instructional unit-level assessment plans for academic years 1997-98 through 2000-01 as documented in the ULEAD as of December 2000.

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Step 1: Identify Purpose

The first step in the ACC Effectiveness Assessment process is to identify the purpose of the unit in terms of the function it serves within the College. The purpose statement answers the question, "Why does this unit exist?" Each unit is an integral part of the College, and as such is responsible for a specific "task" that assists the College in fulfilling its state-mandated mission.

A statement of the unit's purpose includes identification of the people the unit serves (its stakeholders), what the unit provides those stakeholders, and the major benefit they may expect to realize from their association with the unit. Stakeholders—those who will be affected by the unit—certainly include students, but may also include employers of graduates, four-year institutions, and even the community at large.

As of December 2000, sixty (60) instructional units had documented a purpose statement into the ULEAD.

Step 2: Identify Outcomes

In step two of the Effectiveness Assessment process, the unit identifies the results it intends students to achieve and defines criteria it will use to determine whether those results have in fact been achieved. Learning outcomes are the vehicle for determining whether the unit's purpose is being achieved. Outcomes information provides concrete, meaningful, and useful evidence of achievement of the unit's purpose, i.e., whether the unit is doing what it proposes to be doing. Well-designed outcomes also provide information to direct improvement, if such is needed. Thus, a unit's instructional outcomes serve as the foundation for assessment planning.

Outcomes statements

- provide direction to the program,
- communicate what the faculty in the program deem important,
- identify the intended **results** of the educational program,
- describe what students should be able to know, think, or do,
- describe the attitudes, values, and skills students will acquire by completing the educational program, and thus
- are indicators of the effectiveness of a program.

Outcome statements that describe *instructional activities* (goals) rather than *student learning* (outcomes) are not suitable for assessing a unit's effectiveness. Although goals and outcomes seem similar, some differences do exist.

Goals	**Outcomes**
• broad, future-oriented	• specific statements of meas-
• reflect what the program is striving towards or hoping to become	• describe the desired learning/behaviors of students completing the pro-
• refer to instructional proc-	• refer to **results** of instruc-
• used primarily in policy making and general program planning	• used to assess effectiveness of curriculum and provide information for improve-

At a minimum, outcome statements should describe student behaviors and products that faculty would accept as evidence that learning was achieved, thus providing documentation of the effectiveness of the curriculum. Goal statements are helpful for directing instructional activities, but are sometimes too general, broad, or vague for developing specific tools to assess student learning. Goals provide the context for outcomes.

Outcomes statements are needed before appropriate assessment tools and procedures can be selected or designed. Having outcomes statements

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that are both clear and measurable greatly facilitates the identification of appropriate assessment techniques.

Essential components of useful outcomes statements provide answers to the following questions:

- Who will demonstrate the results of the unit's achievement of its purpose?
- When will the results be demonstrated?
- What specific behavior or action will demonstrate these results?
    - What will students know or be able to do?
    - What skills will students have acquired?
    - What attitudes, values, or interests will students demonstrate?

The table below summarizes instructional program outcomes statements for academic years 1997-98 through 2000-01 as currently documented in the ULEAD.

Many units use multiple outcome statements to assess the effectiveness of their unit. The most frequently listed intended outcome is that students demonstrate mastery of information.

Outcome Statement	Programs
Students demonstrate mastery of information in the field/course/program	32
Students pass licensure/certification exams (external exams)	15
Students complete the program/course	9
Students are employed in their field	9
Employers are satisfied with preparation/education of graduates	9
Students are satisfied with the preparation they received for their career in the field	7
Students who succeed in foundation course succeed in target course	6
Students are employable	6
Students demonstrate critical thinking/quantitative reasoning skills	4
Students are satisfied with instruction/instructors	4
Students are qualified to enter baccalaureate programs in the field	3
Students succeed in baccalaureate programs	3
Students demonstrate technical proficiency required for entry-level employment	3
Students act in a professional/ethical manner	2
Students pass TASP	1
Students read at college level	1
Students retain employment for one year	1
Students are satisfied with the technical component of their education	1
Students are satisfied with the learning environment re: values	1
Students write effectively	1

3. Assess Outcomes

In step three of the Effectiveness Assessment process, the unit selects the methods it will use to gather information regarding the achievement of its intended outcomes, conducts the assessment, and reports the results.

The methodology is the bridge between creating a plan to assess effectiveness and implementing that plan; it is the "recipe" for collecting the data. It describes the actions that must be taken (and by whom) to determine whether the criteria for achieving the outcome have been met. Together, the criteria and methodology provide the means with which to adequately, accurately, and specifically document achievement of the outcomes.

Two things are essential to keep in mind when designing methodologies: 1) assessment is concerned with the aggregate performance of a group of students rather than individual student performance and 2) you can't fix in analysis what you bungled in design so design the methodology with an eye to how the data will be analyzed once it has been gathered.

A variety of data collection methods may be used. The methodology should include at least one direct measure of learning for each outcome. A direct indicator of learning is immediately observable. Such methods include pre- and post-testing, standardized exams, "common" final (or questions on) exams, juried performances, etc. An indirect measure of learning may be included in the methodology as a second assessment technique. Indirect indicators of

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

learning are subsequently observable. Indirect indicators might include survey information, job placement data, graduation rates, transfer studies, etc.

The methodology should answer the following questions:

- What "tool" will be used to collect the data?
- When will the data be collected?
- How will the data be analyzed?
- How and to whom will the data be reported?
- Who will be responsible?

According to documentation in the ULEAD, instructional units use a wide variety of methodologies to gather information to assess whether they are achieving the outcomes they intended to achieve, including both direct and indirect measures and quantitative and qualitative data.

- Performance on common (internal) exams
- Performance on licensure/certification exams
- Pre- and post tests
- Comparison of student performance using and not using particular instructional software
- Data from the student database
- Surveys
- Class presentations
- Juried performances/products
- Faculty evaluations
- Course evaluations
- External data (from the THECB)
- Foundation/target assessment tests
- Performance logs
- Portfolios
- Comparison of number of applicants to number of program completers
- Comprehensive exit exams (internal)
- Internship evaluations
- Statistical comparisons of performance in foundation courses with performance in target courses (follow-up studies)
- Aggregate holistic grading of random essays
- Follow-up studies of students who transfer to baccalaureate-granting institutions
- Departmental records of enrollment and completions

Once the methodology has been implemented, the unit should communicate the findings to all faculty in the unit. The results need not be full-blown reports; they should be a summary of the findings, including the results of the assessment and the meaning the unit makes of those results. For example, it is sufficient to report, "Ninety percent (90%) responded they were satisfied. These results indicate employers rate our graduates qualified for their jobs." or "The average was at the 48th percentile, indicating students are not retaining information from the foundation course." Because the outcomes and criteria are stated in specific terms, the results need only be reported in the terms specified in the criteria.

The results should answer these questions:

- What did the unit find out?
- Were the criteria met?
- What do these findings mean to the unit?
- What problems need to be addressed?
- What successes were identified?

The ULEAD revealed many units have not documented the results of their assessments. They have identified outcomes and methods for gathering data, but have not re-visited their assessment plans in the ULEAD to document the results they achieved.

4. Implement Improvements

This step is where the assessment process comes full circle; where the assessment plan begins to "pay off." If the outcome statement and criteria were clear, each result should indicate that the level of learning intended to take place either is or is not being achieved. This is also the step that SACS is particularly concerned about.

(Continued on page 5)

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The Improvement action plan must be specific enough that it can be implemented. It should answer the following questions:

- What will the unit do regarding the assessed outcome?
- What changes need to be made?
- What other data are needed to make improvements?
- What resources are needed to make improvements?
- When will changes be made, and who will be responsible?

If the findings indicate the outcome criteria have been met or surpassed, the unit may decide that no change is needed and report "Outcome will be assessed once more next year to validate results." Then when the outcome is assessed again and the results are repeated, the unit should move on to assess another outcome.

On the other hand, if the findings indicate the outcome criteria have not been met, the results of the assessment must be examined further.

For example, the results may, in the judgment of the faculty, indicate a weakness in the unit in a very specific area where changing X will correct the problem. Assuming change X is implemented, the unit would report, "Change X undertaken." The outcome would be assessed again the following year using the same methodology to discover whether the change improved achievement.

Another example, however, would be that the results indicate a weakness, but it is not obvious where or what change is needed. In this case, the improvement plan might be to establish a committee to examine the situation and report at a later date. The unit would report something along the lines of, "Committee appointed to review W." Once the committee made its report (before the end of the next assessment cycle) a more detailed improvement plan would be drafted, and the outcome would be assessed again in the next assessment cycle.

If after a second and third assessment cycle the unit is still not achieving the outcomes it expects, it is time to examine the outcome (to see if it is realistic), the criteria (to see if it is reasonable), and the methodology (to see if it is reliable).

As with the documentation of results, many instructional units have not documented their improvement action plans into the ULEAD. Of those who had documented improvement plans in the ULEAD, many indicated, when outcomes *were not* achieved and changes were needed, they made changes to curriculum, to instructional methodologies, and to tools used in the effectiveness assessment plan. Additionally, some units changed procedures they used for tracking graduates, policies, relationships with advisory committees or the community, or assignment schedules.

In some units, where the outcomes criteria *were* achieved, improvements were still initiated because the results of the assessment provided serendipitous improvement information—insights into connections between instruction and student performance. Other units' improvement plans, in response to achieving the intended outcome, were to assess a different outcome the next academic year. A few units were satisfied with the results of their assessments and indicated no improvements were needed.

5. Identify Impact

This is the "dessert" of the assessment process. The unit looks back to see how far it has come in its quest for quality. The impact statement makes the value of the assessment process visible—not only to the unit, but to everyone.

At the beginning of each effectiveness assessment cycle, the unit needs to review its assessment plan from the previous year and consider the changes that

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have occurred as a result of the improvements it made. The impact statement answers the question, "What difference(s) did the improvement actions taken by the unit make?"

If the unit changed curriculum, the impact statement is simply a statement of how that has affected student or faculty performance. Sometimes, however, there are unexpected and presumably unrelated changes as a result of improvement actions. For example, if an improvement action included surveying employers for input into skills in which they wished program graduates were more proficient, an unexpected impact of implementing that improvement might be closer relationships with those employers in other ways as well.

Documentation of the impact of the improvement actions should take place a year following the identification of the implementation of the improvement actions.

Originally, the ULEAD did not allow units to document the impact of their improvement actions; this capability was added to the database in Fall 1998. As of December 2000, ten instructional units have documented the impact of their improvement actions into the ULEAD. The major effects of improvement actions these instructional units implemented include the following:

- Improved student planning
- More concise and relevant student advising
- Increased certification exam pass rates
- More graduates because more take license exam
- Improved curriculum
- Improved assessment methodology
- Confirmation of quality of curriculum
- Graduates better prepared for employment
- Maintained enrollments
- Program reputation "good"- attracts students

Conclusion

The Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database is a useful tool for assessing the effectiveness of the unit-level effectiveness assessment process at ACC. It is also a useful tool for demonstrating compliance with SACS criteria 3.1. However, for that tool to provide "adequate, accurate, and specific" data, all instructional units must participate in its use to document their effectiveness assessment plans. Additionally, all five effectiveness assessment process steps must be documented.

—Roslyn Wallace, Coordinator
Institutional Assessment

ULEAD Documentation

- Database resides at
http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us./oiepub/unitlevel.htm
- User name: **ACC Units** (two words)
- Password: **unitgoals** (one word)
- Deadline: **June 15** of each year; however documentation may be entered into the database at almost any time during the year. The database will be closed to data entry from June 15 through July 15 to allow the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to run reports on the status of unit-level documentation.
- Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database Manual available on-line at
http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us./oiepub/unitlevel.htm
- Contact Suzanne Lucignani (223-7603, slucigna@austin.cc.tx.us) if you encounter technical problems during the data entry process.
- Contact Roslyn Wallace (223-7585, rwall@austin.cc.tx.us) if you need assistance with, or have questions about, content.

Using ULEAD—Data Entry

Getting to the database:

1. Open your internet browser (e.g., Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator).
2. Go to ACC internet home page (www.austin.cc.tx.us).
3. Scroll down, click on ACC Intranet Home Page (for Faculty and Staff).
4. Click on Dr. Fonté, President.
5. Click on Institutional Effectiveness.
6. Under green tack, click on Unit-Level Effectiveness Database.
7. Click on Unit-Level Effectiveness Database again.
8. A message box appears: You are leaving the OIE Internet site and entering a password-protected area. If you do not have a password, please contact Roslyn Wallace at (512) 223-7585 or rwall@austin.cc.tx.us. Click OK.
9. You are now at the ULEAD home page. It is a good idea to bookmark this address. From this page you may create, view, or edit unit purpose statements and effectiveness assessment plans.

Create Function:

To document the unit's purpose statement or assessment plan into the ULEAD, you will use the Create function.

1. From the ULEAD home page, click on Create a new Unit Purpose Record or Create a New Outcome Assessment Plan.
2. Type the requested information in each text box. If you need help with what to enter, click on the name line for that text box and a help screen will guide you.
3. When you have completed typing the information into the text boxes, click on the Submit button at the bottom of the screen. You will be asked to provide your User Name and Password.
4. In the User Name box, type ACC Units, then press the tab key on your keyboard.
5. In the Password box, type unitgoals, then click on the OK button.
6. Your record, whether a purpose statement or an assessment plan, will have been added to the database. PRINT a copy for your records by clicking on the print icon of your browser or by selecting print from the file menu across the top of the screen.

It is not necessary to complete a record in one data entry session, so long as you submit what you have completed into the database by clicking on the submit button at the end of the form. You may go back and add more information at a later time by using the search function.

View/Edit Function:

To view or edit documentation in the database, requires the use of a search page to find the specific record you wish to either view or edit. From the ULEAD homepage,

1. Click on View/Edit an existing Unit Purpose Record or click on View/Edit a Unit Outcome record depending on whether you are working on the purpose or the outcomes.
2. In the Search Unit window, click on the ▾
3. Scroll down to find your unit's name from the drop down menu. Click on it to select it.
4. If you wish to sort the results of your search, by year or other criteria, click on the ▾ in the Sort By window. Select the sort criteria you want to use and click on it.
5. Click on the Start Search button.
6. On the Search Results page, click on the unit code in the unit (first) column to view or edit the particular record you want.
7. To edit the record, scroll down and click Edit Record or Edit this Outcome.
8. In the appropriate field (box) type in the edits or changes you wish to make. (If you need help, click on the underlined name to the left of the field or window in which you are working.)
9. Scroll down to the bottom of the form and click Submit Changes.
10. On the Enter Network Password box, in the User Name field, type in ACC Units and in the Password field, type in unitgoals. Click OK. The edited document will be entered into the database.
11. To return to the ULEAD homepage, scroll down to the bottom of the document and click Return to ULEA Database Home Page. To exit the database, click **X** in the top right corner of the window.

Help with data entry (including screen shots) can be found in the **ULEA Database Procedures Manual** online at http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us./oiepub/unitlevel.htm or contact Roslyn Wallace at 223-7585 or rwall@austin.cc.tx.us.

Assessing General Education

The Practical Why

In its 1998 *Criteria for Accreditation*, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) mandates that associate programs (leading to Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degrees) must require at least 15 semester hours of general education courses, including "at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural sciences/mathematics." The institution "must demonstrate that its graduates . . . are competent in reading, writing, oral communication, fundamental mathematical skills and the basic use of computers" (17). ACC has instituted the 15-hour requirement, has specified seven general education outcomes we expect our students to be able to demonstrate, and has identified about 90 courses we say will help instill the skills and knowledge implied by SACS.

The Real Why

So what? All this does nothing to explain the WHY of general education.

While we do not want to reduce intellectual pursuit to a list of skills and courses, the assumption of general education is that a college can craft a purposeful and coherent curriculum to help its students understand more and think better. In his article "Why Do I have to Take This Course: Credit Hours, Transfer, and Curricular Coherence," appearing in the Winter 2000 issue of AACU's *Peer Review*, Robert Sheonbereg says that the questions we should ask ourselves about any curriculum include "[what are the] education intentions of the courses and the connections among them? Do they cohere in the minds of individual professors and students? When added together, do they comprise a meaningful whole?" (5).

ACC has asked these questions. One answer has been to identify general education courses and to create the following seven outcomes that should help gauge whether our students have "acquir[ed] the knowledge and skills to prepare for a career, further their educational study, and contribute to society" (2000 - 2001 ACC Catalog 35). The general education courses are designed to
"help associate degree students to:

1. Possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading, speaking, and listening to communicate effectively above the 12th grade level,
2. Understand numerical data and their implications for daily living,
3. Possess consciousness of society,
4. Think and analyze at a critical level,
5. Appreciate multi-cultural, multi-ethnic contributions to our country,
6. Understand our technological society,
7. Possess basic skills in the use of computers"

We have, in Schoenberg's words, developed "system-wide goals for general education." If we are to "gain broad faculty and student understanding of them," we must "come up with ways to assess them." We are doing that now.

Assessment

The General Education Review Committee was formed by Dr. Fonté in spring 2000 and has been meeting all summer and into the fall, researching, discussing, and defining how we should assess general education at ACC. On the one hand, the general education courses obviously should be a focus. Are the courses doing what we say they do? On the other hand, the general education outcome statements imply skills and knowledge beyond the confines of specific courses, so we should assess more broadly as well. For example, writing is taught in Composition I and II, but the skills may be demonstrated in Psychology or History or Nursing. The committee will assess both general education and other courses.

How will we assess? We will use a process called the Institutional Portfolio, first developed by

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Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas. Five ACC faculty committees (totaling about 57 teachers from about 35 different disciplines) are currently working to articulate general education outcome statements more measurable than the seven listed in the catalog. The committees are also developing scoring criteria and will set the target levels to determine whether outcomes have been met. The committees will become scoring teams in the spring, applying the criteria to student work.

Each semester faculty will be asked to provide student work that will be "scored" using the scoring rubrics developed by the committees for each general education outcome. Scores will be aggregated for each outcome to give us a data-based picture of the performance of our students relative to the general education outcomes we are intending students to achieve.

Will other faculty be involved? Yes. This spring all faculty will have a chance to give feedback on the committees' preliminary work. Once that work has been finalized, the measurable outcomes and scoring criteria will be distributed to all faculty, who will be asked to supply student work.

Basically, all faculty will be asked, "Do you require any assignments that you think meet one or more of these outcomes?" Some of the faculty members responding will be asked to submit an entire section's worth of ungraded assignments. Either the faculty member will copy the assignments and submit them or a member of one of the general education committees will copy the assignments and return the originals to the teacher as soon as possible. The committees will score the samples. Our goal is to score two hundred student samples for each general education outcome each semester.

How will the results be used? First, the assessment results will be reported to the entire college. The primary purpose of the ~~assessment is~~ to begin a conversation among faculty. We will wonder why certain outcomes have not been met. We will scrutinize and perhaps modify curriculum. In short, we will keep a sharper eye on what we do and how it works.

Conclusion

Assessment of general education this year can be seen as preliminary to the larger self-study we are beginning for SACS reaccredidation. Assessment of general education, however, is the start of a continuous process. This spring is a pilot assessment for all of us. We are testing the waters of our research methodology, of faculty involvement and response, of our own committee infrastructure, and of how the data are analyzed and reported. We will see what we learn and modify as necessary.

Even if the shadow of SACS were not over us, it is simply a good idea to see if we are doing what we say we are.

—David Lydic, Interim Dean
Arts and Humanities

For Your Information

The **General Education Review Steering Committee** has a webpage at **http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/gened/**. On this site are agendas and minutes of our meetings, a more complete description of the Institutional Portfolio process, a complete list of subcommittee membership, and additional documents supporting the committee's work. As soon as possible, we will post the subcommittees' work on outcome statements and scoring criteria to the site. Feel free to contact any of us with questions or comments.

Name	E-mail address ....@austin.cc.tx.us	Subcommittee
David Lydic	lydic	Steering Committee Chair
Anne Dunn	adunn	Critical Thinking
Mary Parker	mparker	Mathematics
Rex Peebles*	peebles	Social/Cultural Awareness
Lennis Polnac	lpolnac	Communications
Julie Todaro	jtodaro	Technological Awareness/ Computer Literacy
Jane Latham	jlatham	
Roslyn Wallace	rwall	

*New Chair of Steering Committee. Dr. Lydic has accepted appointment as Interim Dean, Arts & Humanities.

Academic Programs Transfer Effectiveness Measures Trend Data

Austin Community College, in its mission statement (Board Policy A-1 [b]), states that it provides "Freshman- and sophomore-level academic courses leading to an associate degree or serving as the base of a baccalaureate degree program at a four-year institution." To determine whether the College is achieving this mission, an effectiveness assessment plan was developed by the President's Effectiveness Council (PEC). Each year, the plan is implemented and the results are presented to the Board of Trustees and published on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) web site. Following is one outcome of the effectiveness assessment plan for the transfer function and a chart displaying results for the last six First Time in College (FTIC) cohorts.

Purpose: To prepare students for successful college or university transfer.

Outcome/Criterion: ACC's transfer rate will be higher than the statewide transfer rate for First Time in College (FTIC) students who have earned at least 15 semester credit hours (SCH) in baccalaureate transfer courses and who transfer to a four-year college or university within four years of their initial enrollment at ACC.

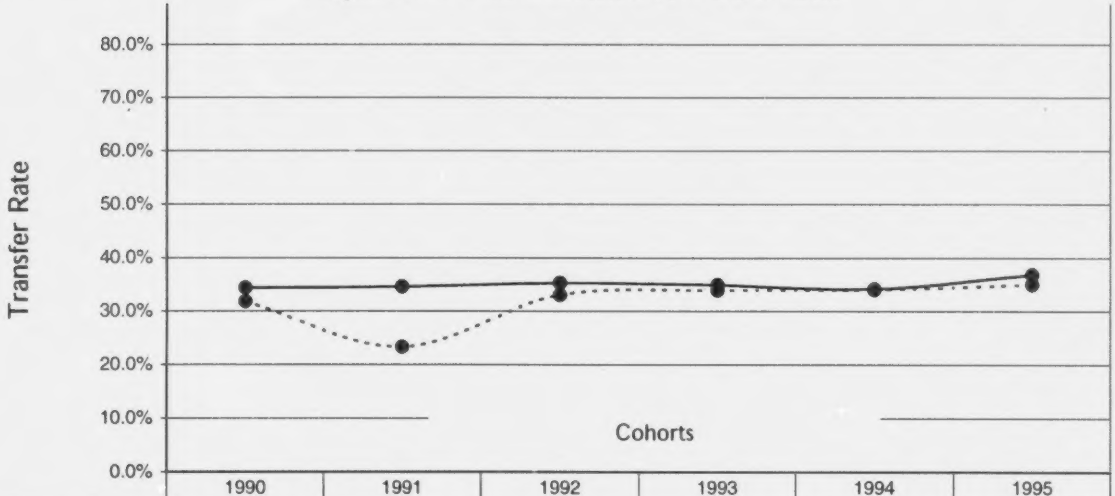
Methodology: Each year the Coordinator of Institutional Assessment will compare ACC and Statewide transfer rates as published in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) *Community College Transfer Rate Study.*

Results:

Comparison data for ACC and statewide transfer rates for cohorts from 1990 through 1995 indicate the following:

- ACC's transfer rate has been consistently higher than the statewide rate
- The difference between ACC's rate and the statewide rate has ranged from 0.2% greater for the 1994 cohort to 11.3% greater for the 1991 cohort.
- ACC's transfer rate has generally increased over time. However, so has the statewide rate.
- Just over one third of ACC students majoring in academic programs and just under one third of students statewide majoring in academic programs transfer .

Comparison of ACC and Statewide Transfer Rates



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
—●— ACC	34.4%	34.6%	35.3%	34.9%	34.2%	36.8%
- - ● - - Statewide	31.8%	23.3%	33.0%	33.9%	34.0%	35.0%

Source: THECB *Transfer Rate Study*, Academic Years 1995-2000

Workforce Graduates Detail

To determine whether graduates of public community colleges in Texas are employed, or continuing their education, or both, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) uses state employment records and various THECB data to locate students following graduation. However, these data may overlook self-employed graduates and graduates who have transferred to private or out-of-state schools. Additionally, the employment records do not indicate whether the graduate is employed in the field for which the degree or certificate was granted.

Each year, ACC surveys its graduates of the previous academic year to provide data that supplement the THECB's tracking data.

The ACC 1998-99 Graduate Survey was distributed during the Spring of 2000 to 1025 graduates for the 1998-99 academic year. A total of 340 (33.2%) questionnaires were returned. Not all respondents answered every question in the survey.

Graduates were asked to respond to questions about:

- employment status after graduation
- whether their degree or certificate was required for their job
- any further education beyond their ACC work
- any volunteer work involving ACC training
- their opinion of how well ACC prepared them for employment or further education

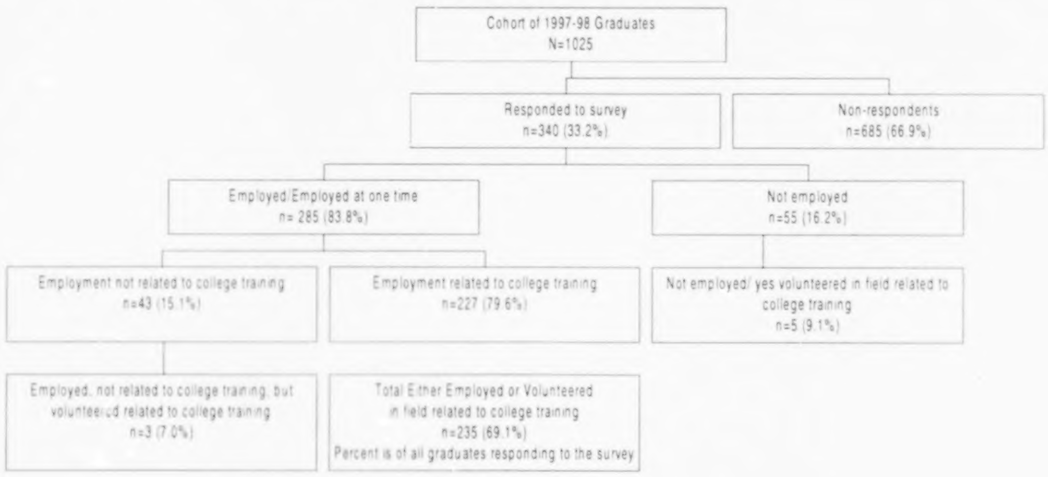
The chart below illustrates, of the 340 graduates responding to the Graduate Follow-Up survey, 285 (83.8%) are, or were at one time after graduating, employed. Of those, 227 graduates (79.6%) were employed in a job that was related to their ACC training. Of the 43 respondents who did not use their training in their job, three (7.0%) volunteered in an area related to their ACC training. Additionally, of the 55 respondents who reported they were not employed, five (9.1%) used their ACC training in volunteer work. Thus, of the 340 graduates responding to the survey, 235 (69.1%) used their ACC training either in their job or volunteer work.

Most (289) of the graduates responding to the survey (340) rated their ACC preparation for employment or further education "excellent" (46.5%) or "satisfactory" (35.0%).

Please rate how well you feel ACC prepared you for employment or further education. My preparation was...

	Respondents	
	N	%
Excellent	159	46.8
Satisfactory	130	38.2
Good only in some areas	32	9.4
Fair	8	2.4
Inadequate	5	1.5
Did not respond	6	1.7
Total	340	100.0

Follow-Up Survey Results: 1998-99 Graduates


Cohort of 1997-98 Graduates
N=1025
Responded to survey
n=340 (33.2%)
Non-respondents
n=685 (66.9%)
Employed/Employed at one time
n= 285 (83.8%)
Not employed
n=55 (16.2%)
Employment not related to college training
n=43 (15.1%)
Employment related to college training
n=227 (79.6%)
Not employed/ yes volunteered in field related to college training
n=5 (9.1%)
Employed, not related to college training, but volunteered related to college training
n=3 (7.0%)
Total Either Employed or Volunteered in field related to college training
n=235 (69.1%)
Percent is of all graduates responding to the survey

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Q&A

Q: I understand that we need to document that we are assessing the effectiveness of our units, but who is supposed to be responsible for making sure the documentation is in the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database (ULEAD)?

Effective this spring, for instructional units, the Dean is ultimately responsible for making sure the units under his/her administration have documented their assessment plans into the ULEAD. Task Force Chairs and Program Coordinators are responsible at the unit level for making sure documentation is completed.

Q: The methodology for our unit's assessment plan clearly stated the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) would provide data to us. We still have not received any data from them. What gives?

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) can provide customized data for individual units, and does so quite often. However, to receive customized data from OIE, someone must *let OIE know (via a data request) what data are wanted—the documentation in ULEAD is not a data request.* Data request forms are available on the OIE web site (accweb.austin.cc.tx.us/oie/datareq.htm), or you can email the office at oieinfo@austin.cc.tx.us, or call 223-7601.

Q: I looked in the ULEAD for the assessment plan our unit did as part of Program Review and it was not there. What happened?

Those units undergoing program review are required to create an assessment plan for their program. It is included in the program's self study report. Documentation of those plans, however must be entered into the ULEAD by someone from the program/unit.

Q: Our unit surveyed graduates to see if they were employed in the field. Problem was, out of the ten graduates we sent surveys to, only one graduate responded. A lot of the forms were returned due to bad addresses. The question is, do we count the one response as 100% (since it was the only one we got and the graduate was employed) or as 10% employment rate (since we sent out 10 forms and got back only 1)?

It depends. First of all, look back at the outcome and criteria you defined. If they said something along the lines of "...of the graduates responding to a survey..." then you may use the 100 percent; however if the outcome and criteria said "..of the graduates X% will report they are employed...." you must use the 10 percent.

In either case, you may wish to think again about the methodology you have chosen to assess this outcome since it does not appear to give you information you can use to make program decisions. A different methodology might include contacting area employers in your field to track your graduates (this is where advisory committees come in handy) or asking graduating students (perhaps those in the "capstone" course) whether they will be taking a job in the next few months. Your improvement plan would include defining a new methodology.

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Richard Fonté, President Austin Community College

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ACC EFFECTIVENESS

Review

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL.8 / ISSUE 1 / FALL 2001

Assessing General Education Outcomes

Background

Many faculty will recall that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) are emphasizing continuous improvement through assessment in all areas of the college. ACC has established seven general education student learning outcomes which should help gauge whether our students have acquired the knowledge and skills to prepare for a career, further their educational study, and contribute to society. According to the 2000-2001 *ACC Catalog*, "associate degree students should

1. possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading, speaking, and listening to communicate effectively above the 12th grade level,
2. understand numerical data and their implications for daily living,
3. possess consciousness of society,
4. think and analyze at a critical level,
5. appreciate multi-cultural, multi-ethnic contributions to our country,
6. understand our technological society, and
7. possess basic skills in the use of computers."

> *Have our graduates acquired the "knowledge and skills to prepare for a career, further their educational study, and contribute to society?"*
>
> *ACC Catalog*

The General Education Review Committee has been at work for over a year studying and discussing ways to assess whether ACC's associate degree students are achieving these outcomes. We have reviewed materials from various other colleges that have instituted assessment of their general education outcomes. In each case, the school made its outcomes specific enough to be assessed and developed a method for assessing them. After much discussion and review, the committee decided to use an institutional portfolio process to document students' achievement of general education learning outcomes.

The institutional portfolio process examines existing student "artifacts" from various disciplines and scores them using "rubrics" designed to establish achievement criteria for each general education outcome. Artifacts are student work such as papers, exercises, videotaped presentations, etc. that are

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assigned, collected, and graded by instructors in the normal conduct of a course. Rubrics provide a common set of standards for each general education outcome, regardless of the course from which the artifact was assigned and regardless of the grade the student earned from the instructor.

The issue of gathering the artifacts of all students or just those of graduates was also discussed at some length. The committee decided that it is simply impractical to examine the work of graduates only. First of all, in transfer programs, which make up seventy percent of the college's courses and house all of the general education courses, graduates are few in number compared to the overall number of students. Secondly, by definition, graduates have left the college, making it difficult to identify graduating students at the front end of the process. However, since we will be attaching student IDs to the student artifacts when collected, the total number of hours completed by each student can be determined. We will then have a basis for comparing student performance with the number of hours completed to determine if progress has been made over time.

Update

There are five subcommittees of the General Education Review Committee: Communications, Critical Thinking, Mathematics, Social/Cultural Awareness, and Technological Awareness/Computer Literacy. Each is responsible for assessing at least one general education outcome. This includes

1. translating the general education outcome into specific and measurable student behaviors,
2. designing a rubric to score the student behaviors, and
3. setting target levels for success.

As of the writing of this article, the Communications and Mathematics subcommittees have completed these three steps, posted their work on the web for comment, and asked faculty to submit student artifacts that demonstrate the stated outcomes. Each of the other subcommittees are working to complete these steps for each of the remaining general education outcomes and should have them ready for comments during the fall semester. At that time, a call will be issued for artifacts that demonstrate those outcomes.

Using the rubrics for each outcome, the subcommittees will "grade" the artifacts submitted by instructors, and the aggregated results will be measured against the standards the subcommittees have established. The analysis of artifacts gathered in the summer and Fall will provide an opportunity for the subcommittees to refine the rubrics or standards (where needed) in preparation for a complete assessment of general education outcomes in the Spring of 2002.

The results of the assessment will be reported to the College community. The results are expected to generate "conversations" among faculty which will lead to concrete improvement actions. Implementing improvements will complete the first cycle of general education outcomes assessment.

I invite you to visit the General Education Review Committee web site (see p.7 for address) for more information on our process, subcommittee membership, and contact information. I also hope you will review the outcome statements, rubrics, standards and possible assignments for literacy skills and understanding numerical data in preparation for participating in ACC's fall and spring general education assessment activities.

—Rex Peebles, Dean
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General Education Review Committee Chair
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General Education Literacy Skills: Outcomes, Rubrics, Standards, and Possible Assignments

General Education Outcome 1. "Possess sufficient literacy skills of writing, reading, speaking, and listening to communicate effectively above the 12th grade level."

Overview: In setting up the outcomes statements and outcomes rubrics, the Communications Subcommittee started with the Johnson County Community College model for General Education Review. However, we have made some changes that are significant. We decided not to include listening as a communication skill to be evaluated because of the inherent difficulty in finding appropriate artifacts and because listening is not specifically identified in the SACS criteria. In addition, we decided to present the criteria for measuring the outcomes (rubrics) as a single set of criteria defining *minimum* competence rather than as a range of criteria from superior to unsatisfactory. Again, our decision was based on the SACS criteria that an "institution **must** demonstrate that its graduates of degree programs are competent. . . ."

Outcomes Statements: Upon receipt of an associate degree from Austin Community College, students should be able to:

1. Read a document and demonstrate an understanding of its content.
2. Write a clear, well-organized paper using documentation where appropriate.
3. Make a clear, well-organized verbal presentation.

Outcomes Rubrics: Reading The following criteria will be used to measure the reading outcomes. Excluding literary works, which require a different methodology for interpretation, students are able to

1. Summarize accurately the content of college level reading material.
2. Recognize main ideas that are stated or implied in the material and show how they are related to the other ideas and supporting details in the material.
3. Explain any arguments used and recognize the logic of those arguments.

Outcomes Rubrics: Writing The following criteria will be used to measure the writing outcomes. Students are able to write an essay/paper that is competent, responsive to the assignment, and adequate. The essay/paper would include these typical features:

1. A thesis statement is apparent.
2. An introduction and a conclusion are present.
3. Most paragraphs are clearly organized, unified, and coherently presented with some transitions.
4. Most of the sentences are clear; that is, they are understandable and punctuated appropriately.
5. If research material is included, it is adequate to the assignment and documented appropriately.

Outcomes Rubrics: Speaking To be judged as competent in speaking skills, students must meet the following minimum standards when making an oral presentation:

1. The presentation has a clearly identifiable design, complete with an introduction and conclusion. The main points are easily recognizable and reasonably developed.
2. The presentation satisfies the minimum specific requirements of the assignment, such as number of references, time limit, or use of visual aids.
3. The presentation is the student's own original work.
4. The topic is sufficiently focused with a clear sense of purpose (e.g. to inform, to persuade, to entertain.)
5. Accurate citation of required number of sources.

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6. Eye contact, vocal control (rate and volume), posture, body language, and demeanor are satisfactory. The speaker has only occasional distracting mannerisms in posture, gesture, body movement, facial expression, or vocalizations (e.g. "um").
7. The speaker uses language correctly and does not detract from the message through gross errors of grammar, pronunciation, or articulation.

Outcomes Standards: At least 75% percent of our students will demonstrate minimal competence on the outcomes. Of course, we expect that a higher percentage of our students will demonstrate minimal competence. However, we have little to go on in setting the standard at the beginning of this process, so 75% has been agreed upon as a reasonable place to start. Notice that we are not surveying graduates, but all students, so it is reasonable that the standard is somewhat lower than it would be for graduates.

Possible Assignments Reading: Students could present oral or written summaries and analyses of written messages which might include articles, text chapters, directions, and narratives so that the accuracy of the information included in the summary/analysis could be compared with the original.

Possible Assignments Writing: Students could write an interpretative/analytical, informative, or persuasive paper that would address a topic by explaining relevant ideas or by taking a position on an issue and defending it with a logical argument. The paper could include sources, appropriately documented, where necessary.

Possible Assignments Speaking: Students could make an oral presentation on a topic, either assigned or selected by student choice, and give an informative or persuasive presentation. The presentation might include outside sources where appropriate. The assignment could be audio- or video-taped for evaluation.

—Lennis Polnac, Professor
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General Education Numerical Data Skills: Outcomes, Rubrics, Standards, Possible Assignments

Outcomes Statements:
Upon receipt of an associate degree from Austin Community College, a student should be able to:

1. Identify relevant data (numerical information in mathematical or other contexts) by

   a. extracting appropriate data from a problem containing extraneous data and/or

   b. identifying appropriate data in a word problem.

2. Select or develop models (organized representation of numerical information, e.g., equation, table, graph) appropriate to the problem that represent the data by

   a. arranging the data into a table or spreadsheet and/or

   b. creating pictorial representations (bar graphs, or pie charts, or rectangular coordinate graphs, etc.) with or without technological assistance and/or

   c. selecting or setting up an equation or formula.

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3. Obtain and describe results by

   a. obtaining correct mathematical results, with or without technological assistance, and

   b. ascribing correct units and measures to results which may or may not include writing an appropriate sentence interpreting the result.

4. Draw inferences from data by

   a. describing a trend indicated in a chart or graph, and making predictions based on that trend and/or

   b. describing the important features of data presented in a table or spreadsheet, and making predictions based on that trend and/or

   c. describing the important features of an equation or formula, and making predictions based on those features and/or

   d. making reasonable estimates when given problems involving quantities in an organized or disorganized form and/or

   e. drawing qualitative conclusions about the original situation based on the quantitative results that were obtained.

Outcomes Rubrics:

The following rubric will measure the mathematics outcomes.

5 = All four major outcomes are demonstrated by the use of more than one subpoint per major outcome.
4 = All four major outcomes are demonstrated.
3 = Three major outcomes are demonstrated.
2 = Two major outcomes are demonstrated.
1 = Only one major outcome is demonstrated.
0 = No major outcomes are demonstrated.

The mathematics outcomes consist of four major outcomes, numbered 1 to 4. These major outcomes are each subdivided into several subpoints labeled by letters. A major outcome is demonstrated when at least one subpoint has been demonstrated, except for major outcome 3, where both subpoints must be demonstrated. In major outcome 3, subpoint 3a will be demonstrated by at least 70% accuracy of the items examined and subpoint 3b will be demonstrated by at least 2 instances involving different measures.

Outcomes Standards:

At least 75 % of all ACC students surveyed will obtain a score of 3 or more on the mathematics outcomes rubric. Obviously we want more students than this to meet what we consider to be minimum standards. But this seems like a reasonable place to start. We also think it would be a good idea to set a standard for the percentage of 4's we will obtain, in order to avoid the temptation to teach to minimum standards. Again, however, we don't feel ready to set a level for that standard yet.

Possible assignments:

The assignments which would provide the required information could be all or a portion of a homework assignment, project, test, or other student work. Students should have the opportunity to provide at least four numerical results (since 70% accuracy is required). At least two of the answers should require different types of units of measurement. Types of problems chosen should include a word problem, and/or a problem containing extraneous data. Students are expected to show how they organized their work (by means of formulas, equation, graphs, and/or tables) in order to arrive at their answers. They may be prompted to do this in the assignment, but the student must supply the details. Also, students should be required to make at least one qualitative conclusion based on their quantitative work.

—Mary Parker, Professor
Math
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Program Review and Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment: Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Technology (HART)

I wish to relate my experience during the Instructional Program Review (IPR) conducted recently. The time invested in completing the process provided many rewards.

After meeting for orientation, a self-study committee was assembled. We participated in a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of our program which produced a vast array of ideas.

The list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was prioritized and used to develop recommendations and action plans. This provided direction for the Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Technology (HART) Program for the next 2-5 years.

The analysis of data required by the IPR was relatively straightforward, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provided the data we requested.

We decided to create three measures of effectiveness for the HART Program to evaluate next year. Our assessment plans include measures of student satisfaction, student success, and faculty rating. We developed several survey documents and plans for their implementation, as well as the methods for collection, analysis and reporting of the data.

Unit Purpose

The HART Department exists to graduate professionally trained people to the "Industry." Students completing our program are provided entry-level knowledge and skills. HART Certificate Program graduates may expect to gain employment in the Residential Heating and Air Conditioning Industry. HART AAS Degree Program graduates may expect to gain employment in the Residential and Light Commercial Heating and Air Conditioning Industry or the Commercial Refrigeration Industry. Austin Community College maintains the HART program to provide a skilled resource of technicians to fill the many vacant positions in the Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry. The major task of this program is to prepare learners with employer identified knowledge and skills. Students may be searching for a profession, may want to enter a new job market, or may desire formal training that will assist them with being promoted from their present position. We also provide continuing education to those already employed in this industry that they may maintain or improve their job skills.

Assessment Plan

Outcome #: 1

Outcome Title: Academic Goals.

Intended Outcome: Students will achieve their intended academic goals, such as Level I Certificate, AAS Degree, etc.

Assessment Criteria: 70% of students will indicate on a final survey that they have achieved their intended academic goals from the HART program.

Methodology: An initial survey of each student's intended academic goals will be conducted during their first HART course. A final survey, conducted at the time of the final exam in the students' last HART course, will be used for comparison. HART faculty will conduct the initial and final surveys. HART staff will collect, sort and enter the responses into a database/spreadsheet. HART Program Coordinator will analyze the data after three consecutive semesters beginning Summer Semester 2001 and will report the Summary and Analysis of Data (results, improvements, impact, etc.) by the end of the academic year, to the Dean of Applied Technology, HART Advisory Committee, HART faculty and staff, and the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database.

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Outcome #: 2
Outcome Title: Professional Goals
Intended Outcome: Graduates that intend to, will find employment in the HART Industry.

Assessment Criteria: 70% of all HART graduates that intended to will, within one year after completing their academic goals, be employed in the HART Industry.

Methodology: An initial survey, of HART students' intended professional goals, will be conducted by HART faculty. HART staff will collect, sort and enter responses into a database/spreadsheet. HART graduates will be contacted by mail with a *Graduate Employment Survey*. Graduates will have been graduated one year from the Spring semester. HART staff will mail the *Graduate Employment Survey* during the summer semester. Responses will be collected, and data will be entered into the database/spreadsheet by HART staff. The HART Program Coordinator will report the Summary and Analysis of Data (results, improvements, impact, etc.) by the end of the academic year to the Dean of Applied Technology, HART Advisory Committee, HART faculty and staff, and the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database.

Outcome #: 3
Outcome Title: Instructional Quality
Intended Outcome: HART Students will rate the instructional quality of the HART Program as "very good" or "excellent."

Assessment Criteria: The average of the combined HART faculty rating will be "very good" or "excellent."

Methodology: The annual *Faculty Rating Report* will be used as the source of data. The HART Program Coordinator receives the report and will average the ratings as follows: Excellent = 5; Very Good = 4; Good = 3; Needs Improvement = 2; Unsatisfactory = 1. The HART Program Coordinator will report the Summary and Analysis of Data (results, improvements, impact, etc.) by the end of the academic year, to the Dean of Applied Technology, HART Advisory Committee, HART faculty and staff, and the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database.

I found the entire instructional review process enlightening. Although the effort was challenging, and the rewards yet to be realized, we expect to be able to effectively evaluate our programs' success and implement changes where warranted.

—Dan Foust, Task Force Chair
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Related Addresses

Assessment of General Education Outcomes, General Education Review Committee Website:
www2.austin.cc.tx.us/gened

Internal Customer Satisfaction:
www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub/publications.htm#Studies

ACC Self-Study Website:
www2.austin.cc.tx.us/sacs

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) home page:
sacscoc.org/index.asp

SACS Criteria for Accreditation:
sacscoc.org/criteria.asp

Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database (U-LEAD):
www2.austin.cc.tx.us/oiepub/unitlevel.htm

Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

In order to provide the College with information to enhance its ability to meet the needs of its employees, an Internal Customer Survey of Fall 2000 services was administered in Spring 2001. The results of this survey were analyzed to determine which areas of the College were best meeting employee expectations and which were perceived as being less responsive. Areas with the lowest overall ratings were provided with more detailed analysis and will develop plans to address the concerns expressed by ACC employees. The following report focuses on college-wide services.

In general, compared to last year:

- *The overall response rate increased from about 15% to about 22%.*
- *The most highly used areas continued to be in Human Resources, but there were differences by employee group.*
- *For Faculty, the most highly used offices included Faculty Development and Faculty Evaluation.*
- *The overall level of satisfaction of respondents improved. The percent of Satisfied responses to Overall service increased from 58% to 61%.*
- *Increases in the level of satisfaction were most notable in offices related to Marketing.*
- *Offices experiencing high levels of dissatisfaction continued to be in the Human Resource area, especially in terms of promptness.*

The Internal Customer Survey form was based on a scanable form that had been developed and administered in 1996. It was modified in Fall 1999 and again in Fall 2000 to reflect the then-current organization of the college and was reviewed and approved by the Executive Vice Presidents and the Employee Association Presidents.

In Fall 2000, two survey forms were created, one covering College-wide services and the other covering Campus-specific services. The College-wide services included 80 offices organized by administrative area during Fall 2000. To assist respondents in identifying the services each office provides, a list of offices with a one-sentence description provided by the EVPs was included with each survey form. This was in response to concerns expressed on the previous survey indicating that many employees do not recognize the specific name of an office. For each office, respondents were given an opportunity to indicate if they had requested or received services during the past year. They then rated the Promptness, Attitude and Overall Service of the offices they had used.

In February 2001, the questionnaire was mailed to 2,206 ACC employees. It was mailed to home addresses to ensure that those without campus mailboxes would receive it. The employee address lists were provided by Human Resources and included all Full-time and Adjunct Faculty, as well as all Profession/Technical, Classified, and Administrative employees. Because of their limited interaction with the College and minimal response rate in 2000, hourly employees were not included. The returned forms were scanned into a data file and the data were aggregated by office for each question. In the following analysis, results for the College-wide services are based on responses of only those respondents who indicated that they had requested or received the services of a specific office during the past year.

Return Rate

The overall return rate for the College-wide form was 22% or 493 employees, up from 15% in 2000. Rates varied greatly by employee group, but were similar in both years.

The highest return rate was 55% of the 38 administrators. The number and percent of Full-time Faculty returning the questionnaire increased from 26% to 29%, and the rate of Professional/Technical increased from 25% to 27%.

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The response rates for both the Classified Staff and Adjunct Faculty declined slightly, from 20% to 19% for Classified Staff and 13% to 12% for Adjunct Faculty.

Response Rates by Employee Group

Employee Group	2001 Survey Response Rate*	2000 Survey Response Rate*
Full time faculty	29%	26%
Adjunct faculty	12%	13%
Professional/ Technical	27%	25%
Classified	18%	20%
Administration	55%	43%
Total	22%	15%

*The percent of each group that returned the form.

The largest percentage of all respondents were Adjunct faculty, while respondents who work in administration comprised the smallest percentage of all respondents.

Percent of Total Respondents by Employee Group

Employee Group	% of All 2001 Survey Respondents	% of All 2000 Survey Respondents
Full time faculty	23%	22%
Adjunct faculty	24%	32%
Professional/Technical	18%	16%
Classified	17%	20%
Administration	4%	3%
Not reported/ Other	13%	7%
Total	100%	100%

Use of Services

The number of respondents requesting or receiving services from each office ranged from a high of 334 (up from 280 in 2000) for the Payroll Office, to a low of 25 for the Community Programs Office.

High Use offices, those having 25% or more of the total number of respondents indicting they had used the service in the past year, included Human Resources, Faculty Development and Evaluation, the Computer Help Desk, and Mail Services.

Overall Service

The areas with the highest percentage of respondents satisfied with overall service—about 90% of respondents—included Duplication Services at HBC, Library Services, and the Health Professions Institute. Other offices with high rates of satisfaction with overall service included the Interpreter Services, the Office of the Dean of Health Sciences, and Video Services.

The general level of satisfaction appears to have increased between 2000 and 2001. In 2000, 58% of all responses for Overall Service were either Satisfied or Very Satisfied. In 2001, this increased to 61%. At the same time, Neutral responses remained steady at 19% and Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied responses decreased from 23% to 20%.

Several individual offices experienced a high degree of change in satisfaction with overall service ratings they received. Of the 10 offices with the greatest increase, three had a change of 20% or more: the Publications Office, Student Recruitment and Adult Basic Education/ESL. Only the TASP office registered a decline in satisfaction with overall service of over 20%. None of these offices, however, were High Use areas.

High Use areas with increases in satisfaction with overall services of 10% or more included the Computer Help Desk, Marketing and Public Information, and Open Campus (Distance Learning). High Use areas with decreases in satisfaction with overall services of 10% or more included HBC Room Scheduling and Inventory/Receiving. The table on the following page displays these results.

Use and Dissatisfaction

There were thirty "high use" offices. Of these, 14 are of particular interest because over 20% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the services provided during the past year.

Of the 14 offices, six were in the Human Resources area. Three of the High Use/High Dissatisfaction offices provide services mainly to faculty: Faculty Evaluation and the Deans of Arts and Humanities and Math and Sciences. All but Faculty Evaluation, HBC Room Scheduling and Continuing Education were also High Use/High Dissatisfaction offices in 2000.

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Satisfaction with Overall Services by Percent Change

Highest Increase in Satisfaction

Office/Service	2001 Survey %Satisfied	2000 Survey %Satisfied	% Change
Publications Office	63%	41%	22%
Student Recruitment	62%	41%	21%
Adult Basic Education/ ESL	74%	54%	20%
Press Relations	53%	41%	12%
Computer Help Desk	64%	52%	11%
IT Programming	58%	47%	11%
Marketing & Public Information	53%	42%	11%
International Education Programs	64%	53%	10%
Open Campus	78%	68%	10%
ACCNet Services	63%	54%	9%

Highest Decrease in Satisfaction

Office/Service	2001 Survey %Satisfied	2000 Survey %Satisfied	% Change
Dean, Communications	70%	77%	-7%
AVP for Academic Affairs	69%	76%	-8%
Dean, Computer Studies & Advanced Technology	74%	81%	-8%
EVP for Instructional Affairs	54%	62%	-8%
Dean, Continuing Education	48%	57%	-8%
Accounts Payable	46%	55%	-9%
Risk Management	76%	85%	-9%
Inventory/Receiving	62%	72%	-11%
HBC Room Scheduling	53%	64%	-11%
TASP Office	40%	62%	-23%

Satisfaction of Employee Groups

For purposes of this analysis, employees were grouped into three categories: Full-time Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, and Non-faculty. Rates of dissatisfaction varied by employee group. For example, while all groups were dissatisfied with the Payroll Office, the percentage dissatisfied ranged from 65% of Full-time Faculty respondents to 29% of Non-faculty, with Adjunct Faculty being in the middle at 36%.

Full-time faculty expressed the highest levels of dissatisfaction in general. In 17 of the 30 High Use offices, their ratings of dissatisfaction were 5% above the average for all respondents. This group was most dissatisfied (over 60%) with Employment/Hiring Services, Payroll Services, Compensation/Classification, and the office of the AVP for Human Resources.

Adjunct faculty generally had lower levels of use than other groups. Their highest levels of dissatisfaction were with the Telephone System (60%), Employment/Hiring Services (58%), and the Office of the AVP for Human Resources (63%).

Non-faculty tended to be less dissatisfied overall than faculty groups. Their highest levels of dissatisfaction occurred with Employment/Hiring Services (50%), Faculty Evaluation (39%) and Personnel Records (31%).

Satisfaction with Promptness and Attitude

The ratings discussed thus far have been based only on the responses to Overall Service. To assist in developing an additional set of information, two other dimensions of quality service were also rated, Promptness, and Service Attitude. Trends in these dimensions may assist areas in developing plans to improve their effectiveness in meeting employee needs.

The table on the opposite page shows the percentage of respondents indicating dissatisfaction with Promptness was higher than that of Overall Service for 11 of the 30, or 37%, highly used offices. However, compared with the results of the 2000 survey, this is a decline of 20%. This suggests that, in general, offices are increasingly prompt when providing services to others.

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Promptness continues to be an issue for several offices that affect many employees, including: Employment/Hiring Services, Compensation/Classification, Accounts Payable, Employee Benefits, and Purchasing.

On the other hand, Service Attitude ratings tended to track with Overall Service ratings; most Service Attitude percentages were within 5 percentage points of the Overall Service ratings.

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Level of Dissatisfaction: Comparison of Dimensions of Quality Service of Highly–Used Offices/Services Listed in Order of Use

College-wide Offices/Services	Level of Dissatisfaction		
	Overall service	Promptness	Attitude
Payroll Office	41%	42%	38%
Employee Benefits	25%	30%	27%
Computer Help Desk	20%	13%	17%
Faculty Development	18%	23%	13%
Mail Services	8%	10%	7%
Faculty Evaluation	42%	39%	30%
Employment/Hiring Services	44%	50%	42%
Library Services	5%	4%	5%
Staff Development	19%	18%	20%
Campus Police (HBC)	9%	9%	11%
Admissions & Records	15%	15%	13%
Personnel Records	37%	37%	33%
Cashier	18%	21%	21%
Duplication Services (HBC)	4%	5%	3%
Purchasing	19%	29%	20%
Telephone system	15%	15%	16%
Instructional Technology	11%	11%	10%
ACCNet Services	22%	30%	23%
Compensation/Classification	39%	44%	35%
Accounts Payable	26%	33%	24%
AVP for Human Resources	38%	40%	37%
Maintenance (Repairs)	15%	23%	14%
Dean, Social & Behavioral Sciences	9%	12%	10%
HBC Room Scheduling	25%	27%	25%
Dean, Math & Science	21%	28%	24%
Open Campus (Distance Learning)	9%	15%	10%
Continuing Education	21%	26%	23%
Executive Dean NRG/RGC	18%	15%	23%
Marketing & Public Information	21%	21%	24%
Dean, Arts & Humanities	25%	27%	25%

SACS Self-Study: Assessing the Present and Planning the Future

Austin Community College (ACC) is a member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). This is the recognized accrediting agency for post-secondary institutions in the eleven southern states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and in Latin America. The Commission accredits institutions that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, specialist's or doctoral degrees.

Periodically, currently once every ten years, each member institution of SACS undertakes a self-study that involves faculty, administrative personnel, professional, technical and classified staff, students, and trustees in a close examination of the institution. At the culmination of the self-study, the Commission on Colleges sends a committee of peers and consultants to evaluate the institution's effectiveness in reaching its stated goals and in complying with the Criteria for Accreditation, and to consult with the institution on issues important to its advancement. The visiting committee develops a consensus of its findings and completes a formal written report. The written report of the visiting committee provides the basis on which the Commission will decide on reaffirmation of accreditation for ACC.

Reaffirmation of SACS Accreditation

Austin Community College is beginning its journey toward reaffirmation of accreditation in 2003. The SACS Committee of Peers will be visiting ACC March 3-6, 2003. We look forward to this opportunity to evaluate our performance as a college, and to ascertain our strengths as well as areas which need improvement. Our goal is to ensure a strong future for our students and our institution. Following the framework outlined for the alternate self-study model, the College will participate in the following compliance and strategic analyses.

Assessing the Present

A select group of faculty, administrators, and other staff will conduct a comprehensive compliance audit to assess all aspects of the College's operations in order to demonstrate compliance with the "must" statements in the *Criteria for Accreditation.* We will develop recommendations and a corresponding action plan to ensure that the College meets all standards by Spring 2003.

The specific goals of the compliance audit are to:

- Sharpen the focus of the institution's stated purpose and mission and to clarify its goals
- Provide an opportunity to identify the critical issues and concerns facing the institution and generate new or improved approaches to these issues
- Increase efficiency and productivity of the operational units of the institution
- Strengthen institutional research

Faculty and staff who are not currently serving on a compliance committee may be asked to assist in gathering data, supply an administrative office, for example Human Resources, with documents, fill out and return surveys or participate in focus groups or other forms of research. Additionally, all faculty and staff need to read the ACC SACS electronic or printed newsletter and regularly check the ACC SACS Accreditation Visit website to stay informed on the process and progress of the self-study and provide input to the process.

Planning the Future

A separate select group of volunteers, interested faculty, administrators, and other staff widely representative of the entire campus community, will concentrate on the focused strategic self-study. They will conduct an in-depth examination of four critical areas for enquiry believed to affect student learning and success in the future. A fifth committee will focus on an action plan based on the findings of the other four committees.

The goals of the strategic focus are to:

- Analyze the skills and learning attributes of the college's prospective students
- Identify what students want from their college experiences at ACC

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- Determine what students expect the learning environment to be
- Determine appropriate integration of technologies throughout the institution
- Determine what is necessary to prepare the College's faculty to use new technology for meeting students' needs
- Identify appropriate teaching and learning resources and determine how to provide them
- Implement findings and recommendations within the fabric of the College through an on-going mechanism to update the environmental scans and the emerging new technologies and apply recommendations through the ongoing three-year Comprehensive Master Plan.

The rationale for this focus is, in a word, Change. Change is everywhere in the higher education literature these days. Prognosticators assert that we are now in the business of creating "life-long learners." That means we must be producing citizens who have creative problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, communication and learning skills, and perhaps most importantly, an ability to cope with change in the economic, social and workplace contexts.

The SACS Alternate Self-Study process offers us an opportunity to meet this challenge. How will we prepare our students to be competent consumers of information? What role will information technology play in teaching? Will we be able to compete with on-line education from electronic providers? How will we respond to the increasing gap between financial demands and scarce resources? Will we remain "student-centered" or move toward a student as client model? How will we ensure we are flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of our community? What steps will we take to prepare students for the workplace? Do we want faculty to share in governance of the college? On and on the questions go.

Self-Study Strategic Focus

Change and growth have been the hallmark of Austin Community College since it opened its doors in September 1973. The need for ACC to prepare students for an increasingly technical world characterized by constant change has influenced our choice of a strategic focus for our reaccreditation efforts. Lifelong learning, critical thinking skills, and information literacy skills are more and more important for our students and ourselves. So we came up with a very fancy title for our strategic focus to reflect our wish to better understand our students' needs and to develop strategies to meet those needs for the next ten years: *Infusing 21st Century Innovation into Learning: A Student-Centered Examination of New Technologies, Faculty Roles, and Institutional Structures.*

With so many things changing so quickly and with new innovations around every corner, how can we predict what we will need to be doing two years from now, much less ten years? This has been the first hurdle for the Self-study strategic focus committees to clear . With a little help from futurist, Dr. Peter Bishop, professor at the University of Houston, Clear Lake, those of us who visited with him recently may have a little better idea of how to "Start Here" and "Get There."

We all know that change is inevitable, and, even if we don't all like it, chaos (at least some chaos) is both good and necessary to effect real change. Even so, there will be constants; for instance, our values and aspirations for teaching and learning outcomes generally will not change. Dr. Bishop helped us focus on the fact that we may not be able to predict what will happen, but we can predict what could happen. And, we can also help keep what we don't want to happen from suddenly surprising us and knocking us off course unnecessarily.

One way of achieving our goal is to say "What do we want to be happening for our students at ACC ten years from now?" Once we define this, then we can use a process called "back-casting" to say things like "Where do we need to be five years from now to get to where we want to be 10 years from now?" We need a vision, and then we need to concentrate our efforts on forecasting what we will need to do and where we will need

(Continued on page 14)

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to be at different stages of the time-line to achieve the vision. When we create this vision, we will include "will", "might" and "should" in that vision. When we create that vision, we want the Austin Community College community to be able to articulate that vision in a very short statement. Most of all, we want that vision to be affirmed through the College's strategic planning process and to show up as meaningful, measurable steps in the rolling three-year master plan.

Want to Participate?

As stewards of the SACS self-study process, we want as much college input and participation in this strategic focus as we can get. This is particularly a very important opportunity for faculty to have input into what their jobs and their classrooms (virtual or physical) will look like ten years from now.

Over the next two years, you will likely hear much more about our Alternate Self-Study, and will have many opportunities to participate. We hope you will. Our focus is purposefully broad and calls into question our institution's structures and processes, our faculty and staff development, our use of technology and innovations in teaching, and our understanding of our future students' needs. To become more familiar with the Alternate Self-Study, or to find ways to participate, contact us. We are looking forward to helping you get involved.

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Closing the Loop

What improvements are instructional units making as a result of assessing student learning outcomes? The improvement action plans documented into the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database (U-LEAD) were examined to answer this question. This article presents a brief summary of the findings from that examination.

Instructional units at ACC are using the results of their effectiveness assessments to improve many aspects of their programs. These include the following:

- Curriculum or the tools used in providing instruction (software/labs/books, etc.)
- Training or professional development for instructors
- Relationships with external entities (employers, licensing agencies, task forces, etc.)
- Relationships with students
- Funding and instructional resources
- Common syllabi, exams, grading policies, instructional objectives, and instructional methods
- Revising the assessment tool or methodology
- Re-assessing the same outcomes for confirmation of positive results
- Assessing different outcomes because current ones were successful
- Continuing already successful practices
- And "no improvements needed."

Unfortunately, some units have not documented any improvement action plans into the database. It is critical to complete this step, as our accrediting agency will be looking for the improvements that have resulted from our effectiveness assessment efforts.

—Roslyn Wallace, Coordinator
Institutional Assessment
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Graduate Outcomes — Workforce Detail

To determine whether graduates of public community colleges in Texas are employed, or continuing their education, or both, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) uses state employment records and various THECB data to locate students following graduation. However, these data may overlook self-employed graduates and graduates who have transferred to private or out-of-state schools. Additionally, the employment records do not indicate whether the graduate is employed in the field for which the degree or certificate was granted.

Each year, ACC surveys its graduates of the previous academic year to provide data that supplement the THECB's tracking data.

The ACC 1999-2000 Graduate Survey was distributed during the Spring of 2000 to 1103 students who graduated during the 1999-2000 academic year. A total of 173 (15.7%) questionnaires were returned. Not all respondents answered every question in the survey.

Graduates were asked to respond to questions about:

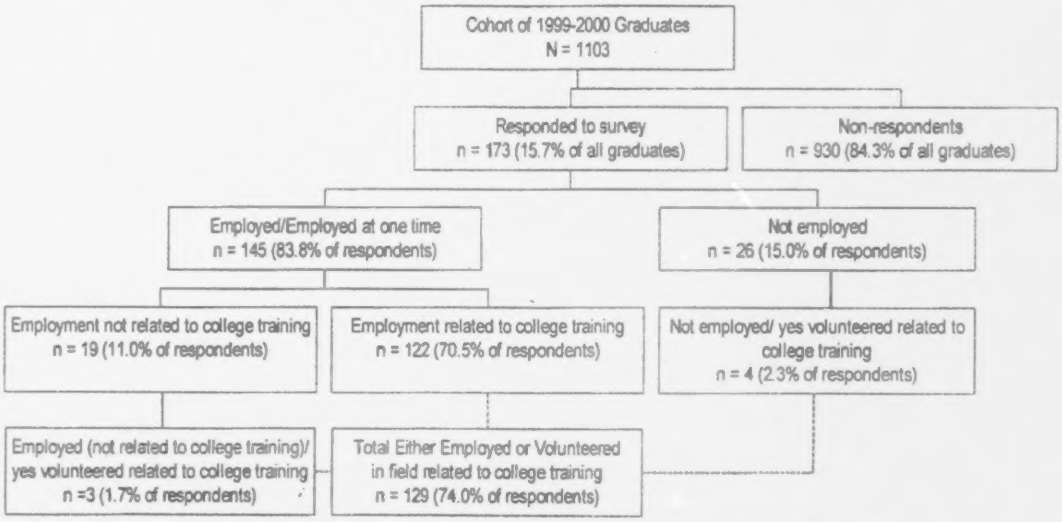
- employment status after graduation
- whether their degree or certificate was required for their job
- any further education beyond their ACC work
- any volunteer work involving ACC training
- their opinion of how well ACC prepared them for employment or further education

The chart below illustrates that of the 173 graduates responding, 145 (83.8%) are, or were at one time after graduating, employed. Of those, 122 graduates (70.5% of all respondents) were employed in a job that was related to their ACC training. Additionally, three respondents (1.7%) volunteered in an area related to their ACC training even though they did not use their training in a job.

Most (150 or 86.7%) of the graduates responding to the survey rated their ACC preparation for employment or further education "excellent" (54.3%) or "satisfactory" (32.4%).

Please rate how well you feel ACC prepared you for employment or further education. My preparation was...

	Respondents	
	n	%
Excellent	94	54.3%
Satisfactory	56	32.4%
Good only in some areas	16	9.2%
Fair	3	1.7%
Inadequate	2	1.2%
Did not respond	2	1.2%
Total	173	100%



Follow-Up Survey Results: 1999-2000 Graduates

Cohort of 1999-2000 Graduates
N = 1103
Responded to survey
n = 173 (15.7% of all graduates)
Non-respondents
n = 930 (84.3% of all graduates)
Employed/Employed at one time
n = 145 (83.8% of respondents)
Not employed
n = 26 (15.0% of respondents)
Employment not related to college training
n = 19 (11.0% of respondents)
Employment related to college training
n = 122 (70.5% of respondents)
Not employed/ yes volunteered related to college training
n = 4 (2.3% of respondents)
Employed (not related to college training)/ yes volunteered related to college training
n =3 (1.7% of respondents)
Total Either Employed or Volunteered in field related to college training
n = 129 (74.0% of respondents)

Q&A

The following questions pertain to documenting effectiveness assessment plans into the web-based Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database (U-LEAD).

Q: I know the deadline for documenting my unit's effectiveness assessment activity into the U-LEAD is in June, but that is a very busy time for faculty. Is there anything we can do to relieve the pressure of that deadline?

A: YES! If there is a better time to document your effectiveness assessment activities, please do it then. The only requirement is that ***by the deadline, all the steps have been documented for the current academic year.*** For example, you might document the outcomes, criteria, and methodologies you intend to implement for the 2001-2002 academic year in the Fall of 2001 (perhaps after the first-of-the-year task force or program advisory committee meeting). Then, after you have conducted the assessment—say as part of the final exam in the course being assessed—you could document the results and improvement action plans in the spring or summer.

Additionally, the appropriateness of the June deadline is being discussed, and could change to a fall deadline. If that happens, you will be informed.

Q: What if my unit does not have the results of the effectiveness assessment by the deadline?

A: This sometimes happens when the methodology of the assessment plan entails student performance that occurs over a longer time period than one academic year. In such cases it is important to document what is happening. In these cases, the unit would indicate "results are not currently available" and "improvement action will be determined when results are available." (Do not leave these fields blank.) Then, when the results have become available and the improvement plan created, go back and enter them in the U-LEAD. Of course, you will have to remember to do this in the next academic year or whenever the results are available.

Q: How do I get to the U-LEAD?

A: From the ACC Intranet homepage (http://accweb.austin.cc.tx.us)

- click on the link to the *Office of Institutional Effectiveness*.
- From there click on *Unit-Level Institutional Effectiveness Database.*
- Then click on *Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment (ULEA) Database.*
- Click *OK* in the message box that appears. You should be at the front page of the documentation database.

Follow the instructions on this page to either create a new record or view/edit an existing record. You will need a User ID and password to submit a new record. To obtain those, or if you have any problems accessing the database, or if you need other assistance, please contact Roslyn Wallace at 223-7585 or rwall@austin.cc.tx.us.

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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ACC EFFECTIVENESS Review

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS FORUM / VOL.8 / ISSUE 2 / SPRING 2002

ACC Student Engagement...Educational Bliss?

In Fall 2001, ACC received the results from its participation as a test institution in the summer pilot of the new Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). This article presents an analysis of ACC student responses to the first item of the survey; a complete analysis will be published later this spring.

Survey Design

The CCSSE, modeled on the National Survey of Student Engagement, is a recent project of the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin. The CCSSE, as the NSSE does for students attending four year institutions, assesses the extent to which community college students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development. The survey items focus on learning and learners.

A substantial body of research indicates a key factor for student learning is the quality of effort students devote to educationally purposeful activities. The greater the effort and time expended by students in the opportunities afforded by their colleges, the greater the likelihood of academic and personal growth, satisfaction with the institution, and persistence within the educational system. The CCSSE is designed to examine students' participation in activities identified as "good practices" that research has shown to be directly related to student retention and other positive student outcomes. The survey items address

- How students spend their time,
- What they feel they have gained from their classes,
- How they assess the quality of their interactions with faculty, counselors and peers,
- What kinds of work they are challenged to do, and
- How the college supports their learning.

Additionally, the survey gathers student educational and socio-economic demographic data. A copy of the survey instrument may be viewed on the web at http://www.ccsse.org/survey.

Results for Item One

The pilot version of the CCSSE was administered in class to a randomly selected group of community college classes in summer 2001. The survey sample included 29 ACC classes, a total of 458 ACC respondents.

Item 1 consisted of a question, "In your experience at this college during the current school

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Office of Institutional Effectiveness

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year, about how often have you done each of the following," followed by a list of experiences related to student engagement. For purposes of this analysis, these were grouped into the following categories:

Experiences related to

- Classroom participation and preparation
- Interactions with instructors
- Assignments
- Interactions outside class
- Using technology
- Effort or determination

Students were asked to indicate the frequency of their participation in each of the experiences using the response options of "Never," "Sometimes," "Often," and "Very Often."

Table 1 displays a summary of students' responses to Item 1, organized by category.

In terms of classroom participation and preparation, most students participating in the survey ask questions or contribute to class discussions, but many may not be prepared for class.

- Fewer than one in ten students (7%) **never** asked questions or contributed to class discussions (see Chart A, p. 3).
- Almost the same percentage **very often** (8%) came to class without completing readings or assignments.

In their interactions with instructors, students

Table 1: 2001 Community College Study of Student Engagement
Responses to Item 1

1) In your experience at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?	Total	Never		Sometimes		Often		Very Often	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Classroom participation and preparation									
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	458	30	7%	185	40%	143	31%	100	22%
Came to class without completing readings or assignments	457	69	15%	260	57%	91	20%	37	8%
Interactions with Instructors									
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	457	50	11%	192	42%	144	32%	71	16%
Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	457	214	47%	159	35%	69	15%	15	3%
Discussed ideas from your readings/classes with instructors outside of class	457	260	57%	141	31%	44	10%	12	3%
Assignments									
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	457	73	16%	145	32%	163	36%	76	17%
Worked with other students on projects during class	458	116	25%	179	39%	127	28%	36	8%
Made a class presentation	458	209	46%	168	37%	51	11%	30	7%
Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course	458	410	90%	36	8%	10	2%	2	0%
Interactions with others outside of class									
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)	458	63	14%	178	39%	151	33%	66	14%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	458	204	45%	167	36%	70	15%	17	4%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	456	314	69%	98	21%	35	8%	9	2%
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	458	102	22%	162	35%	111	24%	83	18%
Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	458	112	24%	152	33%	119	26%	75	16%
Technology									
Used email to communicate with an instructor	458	136	30%	159	35%	96	21%	67	15%
Used an electronic medium (list-serv, chat group, Internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment	458	176	38%	119	26%	100	22%	63	14%
Effort/Determination									
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	458	63	14%	215	47%	139	30%	41	9%
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper/assignment before turning it in	457	137	30%	139	30%	116	25%	65	14%

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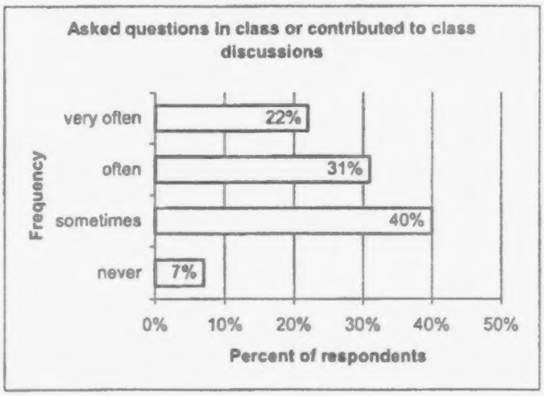
Chart A

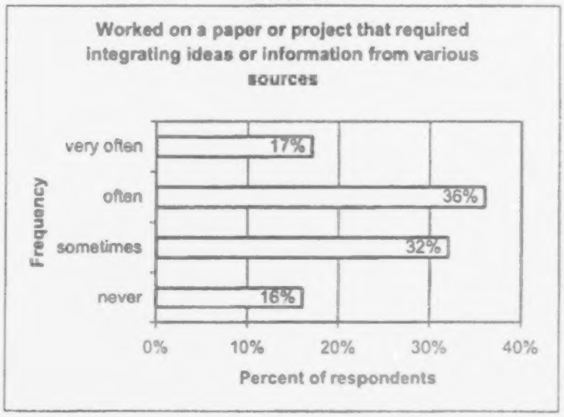


are more likely receiving and discussing feedback on their performance than they are discussing ideas from their readings or their career plans.

- About one in every ten students (12%) **never** received prompt feedback (written or oral) from their instructors and **never** discussed grades or assignments with their instructor (11%).
- Nearly half (47%) **never** talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor, and
- Just over half (57%) **never** discussed ideas from their readings or classes with instructors outside of class.

Data on experiences related to assignments revealed most students are required to integrate ideas and information from various sources, but they are not usually required to work with other students or in the community as part of their course work.

Chart B

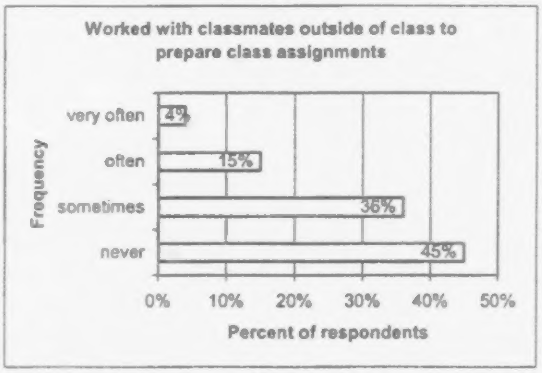


- Sixteen percent **never** worked on assignments/projects that required them to integrate ideas or information from various sources (see Chart B).
- One of every four students (25%) reported they **never** worked with other students on projects in class.
- Nearly half (46%) **never** made a class presentation
- And most (90%) **never** participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course.

Outside of class, students tend to discuss ideas from their class with others, though they rarely work on assignments with, or tutor, other students.

- Almost half (45%) never work with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments (see Chart C).

Chart C



- Just over two-thirds (69%) **never** tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)

Although many students report they use technology in their college work,

- Almost one third (30%) have **never** used e-mail to communicate with an instructor, and
- Just over a third (38%) have **never** used an electronic medium (list-serv, chat group, Internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

And finally, although few students (14%) reported they **never** expend a great deal of effort to meet an instructor's expectations (see Chart D), more than twice that percentage (30%) **never** revise their work before turning it in (see Chart E).

Chart D

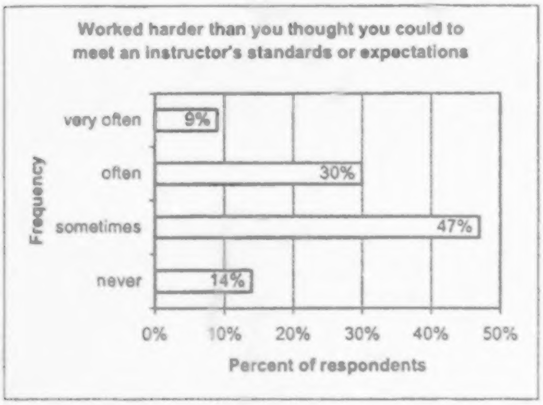
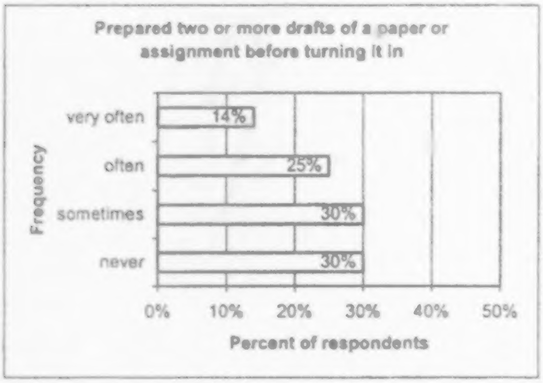


Chart E



This analysis is presented as a "snapshot" of a particular group of students at a particular point in time; conclusions based on these data should be drawn with caution. However, the data do provide a context for a dialogue regarding the role the College plays in engaging students in their college education.

In light of the research that indicates (and that most faculty know experientially) student engagement is a key factor in student learning and retention, these data raise several questions.

- How can faculty identify, during the first week or so of class, which students are not engaged in their educational experience?
- How can faculty determine which students are at risk, based on their level of engagement?
- What can faculty and other staff do to encourage and support students to become more engaged in their educational process?
- Are there specific teaching strategies that can improve students' level of engagement?
- Are there specific strategies that student support services can implement to increase the likelihood of students becoming engaged?

The analysis of other items of the CCSSE should provide additional information pertinent to this dialogue.

- Are these responses equally typical of students in the long semester as of those taking summer school classes?
- Are they equally typical of first semester students as of those who have completed several semesters?
- What factors are common to students who are more engaged in their education?

In Spring 2002, ACC students will participate in the second administration of the CCSSE. The results of this spring survey will provide data for comparisons to the results of this past summer, as well as to the results of other community colleges.

—Roslyn Wallace
Coordinator, Institutional Assessment
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
HBC

General Education Assessment: Where the Rubric Meets the Road

As was reported in the Fall 2001 issue of the ACC Effectiveness Review, the General Education Review Committee has been working on defining measurable general education outcomes and creating rubrics to use in examining student work that should demonstrate those outcomes. This fall, the communication outcomes rubrics were "tested" to determine reliability (the rubric yields the same results when more than one person is applying it) and validity (use of the rubric yields approximately the result one would expect). This article reports the results of that pilot test.

In October, 2001, five faculty (all of whom do not teach English) on the Communications subcommittee of the General Education Review Committee sat down together to apply the communications rubrics (for reading, writing, and speaking) to a set of student artifacts. Using the rubrics, they examined 24 student writing artifacts (in this case, papers from English Composition I, English Composition II, and Sophomore literature courses), twelve student reading artifacts (book reports from a history class), and four samples of student speeches (videotaped from a speech course) to determine how well the students demonstrated the outcomes for each skill area.

For the most part, the scores were consistent across graders with never more than two graders disagreeing with the score for any single artifact. This indicates the rubric is reliable. Additionally, in the area of writing, the number of successful artifacts increases with the exposure to the content of the courses. This indicates the rubric does in fact measure the skills that students should be able to demonstrate as they progress in their college experiences. The table below displays the results of the scoring session.

The Communications sub-committee feels confident that the rubric can be used to determine students' learning in the communications skill areas of general education.

—Linnis Polnac, Professor
English
NRG

Results of Pilot Test of General Education Communications Skills Rubric

Area (Number of samples)	Number of Samples		Number of Faculty Scoring the Samples	Number of Samples with No Score Disagreement	Number of Samples with Score Disagreement	
	Met criteria	Did not meet criteria			One Grader Disagrees	Two Graders Disagree
Writing (24)	19	5	5	15	6	3
Reading (12)	10	2	5	8	3	1
Speech (4)	4	0	5	4	0	0

Transfer Outcomes: Start Here...Get There and Succeed

Recent transfer reports from the University of Texas at Austin and Southwest Texas State University confirm that Austin Community College students perform well after transferring. The reports also show that ACC is still the largest feeder for both these institutions. Following is a summary of each school's report.

The University of Texas at Austin

The University of Texas at Austin reports the following information regarding a cohort of ACC students who entered the University in fall 2001.

- ACC students make up nearly a quarter of the total transfer students population for UT. Of 990 total applications from ACC students, 491 (49.6%) were admitted and 473 (96.3%) actually enrolled showing a very high "admit-to-show" rate.

- The average GPA of those who enrolled was 3.46 and the average number of hours completed prior to transferring was 53, with the majority of students having attended only ACC prior to transferring to UT.

- Students transferred most into the colleges of Liberal Arts (169) and Natural Sciences (112), with the fewest number of students transferring into the college of Nursing (8), Social Work (6), Pharmacy (3) and Architecture (2).

- Regarding performance after two semesters at UT, ACC students averaged a higher GPA for courses taken in English, math, science, foreign language, social science and "other" areas when compared to the average of all transfers from other Texas institutions, with only a slight decrease (0.067) in the GPA of students taking visual and performing arts.

Southwest Texas State University

The report from Southwest Texas State University reflects performance and retention of ACC students during their first academic year (fall 2000 and spring 2001) at SWT.

- Overall, 655 students transferred to SWT during the academic year making up nearly a third of the total transfer population.

- While the decision GPA[1] for ACC students (2.76) was slightly lower than the average for all two-year college transfers (2.82), the average for both the first and second semester cumulative GPA achieved at SWT was higher (ACC = 2.55, all two-year colleges = 2.51).

- Students transferring with either fewer than 15 hours (2.81) or with greater than 60 hours (2.73) achieved the highest GPA after the first year at SWT.

- By major, ACC students averaged a higher GPA in the areas of education (2.72), liberal arts (2.57), science (2.44), business (2.46) and fine arts/communications (2.64).

- Students transferred mostly into the colleges of Business (176), Liberal Arts (104), Fine Arts/Communications (100) and Education (85), with fewer students transferring into Science (72), Applied Arts (54) and Health Professions (30).

- When looking at the return rate for the second fall (2001), 80% of ACC students returned which is 2% higher than the return rate for all transfer students.

—Christina Duncan
Articulation Officer
HBC

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[1] *Decision GPA is the student's cumulative GPA prior to being accepted at the university. The minimum must be at least 2.25.*

Workforce Education Program Outcomes

A critical component of institutional effectiveness is the assessment of student outcomes. For workforce programs, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has mandated specific institutional effectiveness outcome measures for all community and technical colleges. Two key measures for the quality of workforce education programs are the number of graduates produced over a three-year period and the successful placement of those graduates into the workforce or other institutions of higher education.

The THECB reports data for these two measures to community colleges annually. Each community college must use these results to document the quality of programs when completing the Annual Institutional Self-Evaluation, which is a part of the Carl Perkins grant process each May. In addition, when a community college submits new program proposals, the college must also submit improvement strategies for any existing program not currently meeting the standards for these two measures. The THECB's logic behind this requirement is that new programs should not be approved if quality cannot be demonstrated in the existing programs.

The THECB also requires a summary evaluation of the college once every four years. In the last year, the THECB has moved away from doing On-Site Visits to review institutional effectiveness and has created a Desk Review process. Currently, if a college is scheduled for review, the college may choose an On-Site Visit or a Desk Review. If the college does not meet standards on the Desk Review, then an On-Site Visit is triggered. When a college has several workforce education programs that do not meet the quality standards for the number of graduates and for graduate placement, then a site visit will be initiated. (The site visit may be targeted to review just a few programs or it can be comprehensive.)

Essentially, the THECB has provided these broad measures as minimum standards for workforce education programs because they serve as an efficient assessment of the program. If a program cannot produce sufficient graduates, this may indicate a lack of student demand, a lack of business/industry demand, or even some curricular issues that need to be addressed. More importantly, if the graduates are not finding employment or otherwise continuing their education, it is worth questioning whether the program is meeting its mission. The measures stipulate the following:

- Each workforce education program will produce at least 15 graduates over a three-year period, and
- At least 85% of the graduates in each workforce education program will be placed within one year of graduation (successful placement is considered employment or enrollment in a post-secondary educational institution and it is calculated over a three-year period).

The three-year measurement period allows small or developing programs ample opportunity to balance graduate outcomes over a longer period. New programs are also given a three-year period to develop and produce graduates before their assessment begins. In the most recent report from the THECB, three new ACC programs (Biotechnology, Culinary Arts, and Pharmacy Technician) were not evaluated yet because they have not reached their three-year mark.

ACC offers many different majors and specializations across a variety of workforce education programs. The THECB evaluates a program as a whole (by the CIP area, in technical terms), so several individual majors or specializations may be included in the program figures. Again this helps to balance smaller specializations within a program area that may not be able to individually achieve the standards.

(Continued on page 9)

Table 1: THECB Workforce Education Outcomes

CIP	Workforce Program Area (THECB name)	Total Over 3 Years (1996 - 1999)			Program Meets Standard	
		# Graduates	Placement			
			#	%	Graduates	Placement
11.0101	Computer & Information Sciences, General	30	29	96.7%	✓	✓
11.0201	Computer Programming	24	20	83.3%	✓	✕
15.0303	Electrical, Electronic & Communications Engineer	302	292	96.7%	✓	✓
15.0501	Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Technology	24	23	95.8%	✓	✓
15.0702	Quality Control Technology/Technician	10	10	100.0%	✕	✓
15.1102	Surveying	13	10	76.9%	✕	✕
20.0201	Child Care & Guidance Workers & Managers, General	44	43	97.7%	✓	✓
22.0103	Paralegal/Legal Assisting	43	41	95.3%	✓	✓
23.1101	English Technical & Business Writing	11	11	100.0%	✕	✓
31.0501	Health & Physical Education, General	0	0	N/A	✕	✕
43.01*	Criminal Justice & Corrections	162	155	95.7%	✓	✓
43.02*	Fire Protection	61	61	100.0%	✓	✓
46.0201	Carpenter	6	6	100.0%	✕	✓
47.0101	Electrical & Electronics Equip. Installers & Repairer	11	11	100.0%	✕	✓
47.06*	Vehicle & Mobile Equipment Mechanics	17	12	70.6%	✓	✕
47.0604	Auto/Automotive Mechanic/Technician	20	20	100.0%	✓	✓
48.0101	Drafting, General	200	189	94.5%	✓	✓
48.02*	Graphic & Printing Equipment Operator	28	25	89.3%	✓	✓
48.0508	Welder/Welding Technologist	45	42	93.3%	✓	✓
50.0402	Graphic Design, Commercial Art & Illustration	68	59	86.8%	✓	✓
50.0406	Commercial Photography	24	20	83.3%	✓	✕
50.0909	Music Business Management & Merchandising	25	23	92.0%	✓	✓
51.0205	Sign Language Interpreter	10	9	90.0%	✕	✓
51.0803	Occupational Therapy Assistant	52	48	92.3%	✓	✓
51.0806	Physical Therapy Assistant	57	51	89.5%	✓	✓
51.09*	Imaging Technology	79	77	97.5%	✓	✓
51.0904	Emergency Medical Technology/Technician	23	23	100.0%	✓	✓
51.0909	Surgical/Operating Room Technician	35	33	94.3%	✓	✓
51.1004	Medical Laboratory Technician	31	31	100.0%	✓	✓
51.15*	Mental Health Services	68	62	91.2%	✓	✓
51.1601	Nursing, General	278	272	97.8%	✓	✓
51.1613	Practical Nurse (LPN Training)	130	125	96.2%	✓	✓
51.2309	Recreational Therapy	19	17	89.5%	✓	✓
52.02*	Business Administration & Management	117	102	87.2%	✓	✓
52.0302	Accounting Technician	39	38	97.4%	✓	✓
52.04*	Administrative & Secretarial Services	55	52	94.5%	✓	✓
52.08*	Financial Management & Services	13	13	100.0%	✕	✓
52.09*	Hospitality Services Management	8	7	87.5%	✕	✓
52.1204	Business Systems Networking & Telecommunications	31	27	87.1%	✓	✓
52.1401	Business Marketing & Marketing Management	11	9	81.8%	✕	✕
52.1501	Real Estate	2	2	100.0%	✕	✓

Note: New programs and Programs that were closed have been excluded from the report.

* Combined programs with two or more individual award areas. THECB evaluates these programs as a single group.

(Continued from page 7)

A review of the table (page 8) shows most of ACC's workforce education programs are in fine shape (note the program areas are identified by the program inventory title used by THECB, not by the local ACC name). The programs with large numbers of graduates are doing well with their placement rates. Five out of the six programs with more than 100 graduates had close to or over a 95% placement rate. These largest programs include Electronics Technology, Nursing (Professional and Vocational), Engineering Design Graphics, Criminal Justice, and Business Administration.

Overall, there were eleven program areas that did not meet the fifteen graduate standard. These programs tend to have relatively small enrollments and the number of graduates can fluctuate from year to year. The programs not meeting the graduate standard include Quality Assurance, Geomatic/Land Surveying, Technical Communications, Physical Fitness Technology, Building Construction Technology, Consumer Electronics Repair, Interpreter Preparation, Financial Management, Hospitality Management, Marketing, and Real Estate.

The majority of workforce programs met the placement standard for their graduates. The standard is 85% placement. The THECB identifies placement as employment or attending a post-secondary institution. Therefore, students who are still enrolled in college after graduation will be counted as successful even if they are not working. The presumption is that the student is continuing his or her education to meet long term employment objectives. The placement rate includes all students that were found through the follow-up process. (See "How the THECB Gets the Data," at the end of this article.) Some students will be indicated as "not found" since they have moved out of state or otherwise cannot be located on state employment databases.

The six programs that did not meet this standard tended to have 20 or fewer graduates, which means that one missing graduate could influence the results by 5% or more. The six programs not meeting the placement standard are Computer Programming (only one part of the Computer Information Technology program), Geomatics/Land Surveying, Physical Fitness Technology, the Vehicle and Mobile Equipment Mechanics area (the certificate programs in Automotive Technology – Small Engine, Marine Engine, and Motorcycle Repair), Photographic Technology, and Marketing.

How the THECB Gets the Data

Note: This is a simplified presentation of a complex process, which actually involves the Texas Workforce Commission as the active agent for several steps.

Each year the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) produces a series of reports on the outcomes of community college graduates and leavers (students who left the institution without completing a program). The follow-up process conducted by the state is called the Automated Student and Adult Learner Follow-up System (ASALFS). It includes the following steps:

1. Each fall, Austin Community College submits the CBM009 Graduate Report to the THECB for students that have graduated the previous academic year (December, May, and August).
2. THECB then checks whether those students are enrolled in a post-secondary institution in Texas in the fall semester following their graduation to determine if they are pursuing additional education.
3. THECB identifies employment in the year following graduation with the Unemployment Insurance Wage Records that most businesses submit to the state. (Some smaller businesses do not submit these tax records to the state.)

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4. The data on employment and additional education are combined with the original graduate report to produce the initial placement report.
5. The student records that were not identified by the state follow-up are sent to the College for the Supplementary Follow-up (on a report called CBM116).
6. With the assistance of faculty and staff at the program level, the missing students are located, and their status is then reported back to the THECB.

The entire process is completed one and a half years after the College submits the original graduate report. For example, ACC submitted to the THECB its graduate report for the 1999-2000 academic year in November 2000. The Supplementary Follow-up report will be due to the THECB by March 2002 and the entire process with complete data will be finished by April 2002. THECB collects and reports additional data regarding the training-relatedness of the student's occupation and wage information on a limited number of graduates, but this report has a lag time of slightly over two years.

—Christopher Vinger,
Coordinator, Analysis
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
HBC

"You Can Learn, but You Can't Park"

Introduction

In Spring 2001, Austin Community College participated with twelve south Texas community colleges in a student satisfaction survey developed by representatives of the Gulf Coast Consortium of Institutional Research (GCAIR) in response to the need for data that could be used to compare the perceptions and preferences of students across institutions. Nearly 500 surveys from ACC students were collected during the study (N = 497).

This was the first year that a college outside of the Gulf Coast Consortium has participated. A major purpose of this survey was to generate benchmarks for the items dealing with student satisfaction with college services. Participating colleges could, thus, determine whether their students were more or less satisfied with these services than students at similar institutions.

The survey focused on reasons why students chose the attended college, perceptions of extracurricular activities, importance of and satisfaction with college services, and students' perceptions of the college in general.

The Institutional Research Office at San Jacinto Community College collected and summarized the data into tables and distributed them to each of the other participating colleges. ACC excerpted its data and used it to compare its analysis of student survey responses with those of three other colleges (comparable in enrollment): Houston Community College, North Harris Montgomery Community College, and San Jacinto Community College.

Findings

Demographics & Miscellaneous

A demographic analysis of the ACC students that participated in the 2001 GCAIR survey revealed that, overall, the sample was representative of the ACC student body. ACC students participating in the 2001 GCC survey were comparable to the ACC student body population in gender, age, and ethnicity.

- Over 75% (77.3%) of ACC respondents indicated that they worked either full-time or part-time off campus.
- The majority of ACC students (62.3%) indicated that their main educational goal was to transfer to a 4-year institution.

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- Nearly 40% of ACC students surveyed indicated that they would like to transfer to the University of Texas (38.7%) and another 32% (31.9%) reported Southwest Texas State as their transfer destination.

Note: In the analysis that follows, averages are given for male respondents (M) and for female respondents (F) separately.

Why Students Chose College

Course-related items were cited by ACC survey respondents as important factors in their decisions to attend ACC. The ranking system used 1 = "Not a reason to attend," 2 = "Minor reason to attending," and 3 = "Major reason for attending." ACC survey respondents cited as the two most important factors they considered when selecting a college, "Offered courses I wanted" (M avg. 2.66 and F avg. 2.73) and "Offered courses I wanted at times I wanted" (M avg. 2.51 and F avg. 2.79). Analysis of the 3 comparison colleges revealed that, like ACC survey respondents, students selected "Offered courses I wanted" and "Offered courses I wanted at times I wanted" as important factors in their decision regarding which college to attend.

In addition, ACC survey respondents deemed a variety of other items as important in their decision to attend ACC. These included the following:

- "Low cost of tuition and fees" (M avg. 2.44 and F avg. 2.61),
- "Convenient location" (M avg. 2.44 and F avg. 2.49),
- "Work while attending" (M avg. 2.45 and F avg. 2.44), and
- "Good chance of personal success" (M avg. 2.32 and F avg. 2.42).

ACC survey respondents did not rate "Advice of High School counselor/teacher" (M avg. 1.23 and F avg. 1.31) as very important. ACC survey respondents had the lowest importance rating of all participating colleges on this item.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Of respondents who marked "Yes, frequently" to the items listed under participation in extra-curricular activities, male ACC survey respondents reported high participation rates in athletic activities with "Fitness Center" (11.7%) and "Use tennis courts, running track, etc." (7.7%) as the activities most frequently utilized. Female ACC survey participants reported the "Fitness center" (6.8%) and "Visit art gallery" (3.9%) as frequent extracurricular activities.

Both male and female ACC survey respondents indicated low participation in "Student government" (with 3.6% of males and 1.8% of females responding "Yes, frequently") and "College sponsored dances/parties" (2.6% of males and 1.1% of females responding "Yes, frequently"), activities also reported to be infrequently used by survey respondents from all colleges.

Importance of College Services

The college services deemed most important by ACC survey respondents were consistent with their reasons for choosing the college. On a 5-point scale, where 1 = "Not important at all" and 5 = "Very important," ACC male and female respondents reported "Availability of courses at times needed" (M avg. 4.46 and F avg. 4.70) and "Variety of courses" (M avg. 4.42 and F avg. 4.56) as important college services.

Interestingly, female ACC survey respondents rated college services that dealt with faculty/staff-student relations as more important than did their male counterparts. Specifically, female ACC survey respondents reported higher levels of importance for the following:

- "Racial harmony at this college" (M avg. 3.66 and F avg. 4.16),

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- "Attitude of non-teaching staff to students" (M avg. 3.79 and F avg. 4.21),
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to students of your ethnicity" (M avg. 3.64 and F avg. 4.22),
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to students taking developmental courses" (M avg. 3.59 and F avg. 4.10),
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to disabled students" (M avg. 3.71 and F avg. 4.22), and
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to students of your gender" (M avg. 3.55 and F avg. 4.21).

Similarly, female ACC survey respondents placed higher importance on "Financial aid services" (M avg. 3.70 and 4.16) than their male ACC counterparts.

College services considered less important to ACC survey respondents, as well as to all survey respondents, were "Student govt./senate/congress" (M avg. 2.88 and 2.99) and " Varsity athletics" (M avg. 2.91 and 2.54).

Satisfaction with College Services

ACC survey respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction on college services they previously rated on importance (1 = "Very dissatisfied"; 5 = "Very satisfied"). Both male and female ACC survey respondents were satisfied with "Telephone registration" at the college (M avg. 3.98 and F avg. 4.14) and "Availability of senior institution transfer plans" (M avg. 3.94 and F avg. 3.95).

Female ACC survey respondents were more satisfied with "Information provided in course schedule" (M avg. 3.80 and F avg. 4.08) than their male counterparts.

As with the importance scores, female ACC survey respondents reported higher satisfaction ratings than males for faculty/staff-student relations:

- "Racial harmony at this college" (M avg. 3.78 and F avg. 3.83),
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to students of your ethnicity" (M avg. 3.74 and F avg. 3.94),
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to students taking developmental courses" (M avg. 3.62 and 3.90),
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to disabled students" (M avg. 3.71 and F avg. 3.87), and
- "Attitude of faculty/staff to students of your gender" (M avg. 3.68 and F avg. 3.93).

Comparison of Satisfaction and Importance of College Services

Further analysis of ACC survey respondents' perceptions of college services revealed a decidedly large gap between satisfaction and importance ratings for "Parking facilities and services" (M avg. -1.07 and F avg. -1.22). This negative difference score indicates that ACC survey respondents place a high importance level on parking at ACC, yet are not very satisfied. The "high-importance – low-satisfaction" finding for parking facilities is a finding that is common across the majority of colleges participating in this survey.

Other negative gap scores for ACC survey respondents were found in course-related services: "Availability of courses at times needed" (M avg. -.62 and F avg. -.78) and "Variety of courses" (M avg. -.52 and F avg. -.56), an important finding given the value of these services to ACC respondents.

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Perceptions of the College in General

The majority of ACC students surveyed expressed satisfaction with the college and the education that they were receiving. However, male ACC survey respondents were less likely than female students to indicate that they would choose the same college if they could start again (70.3% of males vs. 81.9% of females responding "Definitely or probably yes to attending this college if you could start college over") and less likely to describe the quality of the education that they received as "good" or "excellent" (70.6% of males vs. 80.2% of females). This trend is also evident at the other three colleges.

Summary

The GCAIR survey was a very valuable tool for analyzing ACC students' perceptions on a variety of issues and for making comparisons with other, similar community colleges.

An important finding in the report was the high importance placed by ACC students on variety and availability of courses and the corresponding gap in satisfaction with these services. This finding, combined with the finding that course offerings (variety and time) were major reasons for attending the institution, indicates that this is an issue that may need to be addressed.

Cost and location, always important to the student population, were also important reasons students gave for attending ACC.

And finally, the gender gap between male and female ratings of items dealing with faculty/staff-student relations, needs to be examined further.

—Ziv Shafir,
Coordinator, Analysis
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
HBC

General Education Assessment
http://www.austin.cc.tx.us/gened/

Workforce Education
http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ctc/ie/

Transfer Programs
http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us./oiepub/initiatives/assessment/measures.html
and
http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us./transfer

Gulf Coast Consortium of Institutional Research
2001 Survey Results
http://www.sjcd.cc.tx.us/research/gcair01.pdf
and
http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us./oiepub/pubs/gcc_2001spring.pdf

Community College Survey of Student Engagement
http://www.ccsse.org/survey/survey2.pdf

...Getting Better all the Time

Austin Community College's Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey (ICSS) conducted in the spring of 2001, identified fourteen "highly-used" offices with twenty percent or more respondents reporting they were dissatisfied with the office's overall service. These offices included the following:

ACCNet Services
Accounts Payable
Compensation/Classification
Continuing Education
Employee Benefits
Employment/Hiring Services
Faculty Evaluation
HBC Room Scheduling
Marketing & Public Information
Office of the AVP Human Resources
Office of the Dean of Arts & Humanities
Office of the Dean of Math & Sciences
Payroll Office
Personnel Records

In September, 2001, each of these offices was asked to report on the status of the actions they planned to take (or had already taken) to improve the quality of their overall service, the promptness of their service, and their service attitude.

Implementation of Improvements

An examination of all of the status reports submitted revealed a total of 100 improvements planned by the fourteen Highly Used/High Dissatisfaction (HU/HD) offices in response to the ICSS conducted this past spring. As of October 1, 2001, twenty-nine of these had been completed and thirty-seven are expected to be completed within the next six months. Of those remaining, nineteen are "on-going," and the rest are scheduled to be completed by December 2002.

Types of Improvements

The status reports also revealed noticeable similarities in the actions the fourteen Highly Used/High Dissatisfaction offices planned to take to improve their services, as well as improvements unique to the function each office fulfills. The similarities in improvement actions can be categorized in the following ways:

- Hire, upgrade, or reassign staff. Eleven (79%) of the (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Develop on-line or software applications. Eleven (79%) of the (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Participate in customer service training. Ten (71%) of the (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Establish or write procedures for customers or staff. Nine (64%) of the (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Increase teamwork within the office by cross training, staff meetings, staff retreat, or use of external consultants. Nine (64%) of (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Take actions to improve communication both within the office and with customers. Six (43%) of (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Collect customer feedback via point-of-service survey, "card," or focus groups. Six (43% of (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.
- Train or retrain staff. Four (29%) of (HU/HD) offices planned to do this.

It will be interesting to see the impact of these improvements on the results of the Internal Customer Survey of Spring 2002.

—Roslyn Wallace , Coordinator,
Institutional Assessment
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
HBC

Q&A

Roslyn Wallace, Coordinator of Institutional Assessment, answers questions about creating and documenting assessment plans and activities. You may contact her by email (rwall@austin.cc.tx.us) or by phone (223-7585).

Q: I've heard that because we are an academic/transfer discipline, we are required to measure the percent and performance of students that transfer to a four-year school to demonstrate that our unit is effective. There are two problems with this. First, students do not "major" in our discipline, but take courses because it fulfills the requirement for an elective for their major. Second, we do not have access to information on which of our students continued their study of our discipline at any specific four-year institution, thus we also do not know how well they did. Can we use something else to measure the effectiveness of our program?

A: Sure. There is no requirement that you measure any *particular* outcome to demonstrate the effectiveness of your unit. The goal of conducting an assessment is to provide information *you* can use to improve your students learning.

A quick review of the assessment plans in the U-LEAD reveals several methods academic units use to discover areas in which improvements to student learning may occur.

•The art department invites university faculty to judge students' work based on agreed upon criteria.

•Many academic disciplines measure student mastery of specific course content to discover weaknesses in the curriculum so that improvements may be implemented. For example, the biology department looks at the specific competencies students should have mastered in the "foundation" course if they are to be successful in the "target" course, either within their discipline or other disciplines. Developmental writing examines their students' performance in English composition I.

•Other disciplines examine grade distributions across two courses to gather information on how well students are learning. Chemistry, for example looks at grade distributions for general chemistry I and general chemistry II.

•The government department administers an "exit" exam to all sections of GOVT 2306 to examine student performance.

•The speech department relies on standards established by the National Communication Association to assist them in examining students' oral competency skills.

In disciplines that are science related, experiences that measure students' mastery of the scientific method could be useful in providing feedback to the discipline. Another method of gathering feedback to determine the effectiveness of a course could include measuring change in students' attitudes. In environmental science, for example, the difference in the number of students who recycle at the end of the course and the number who did so at the beginning of the course might indicate how well the course influenced student behavior.

The important thing is to design your assessment so that it provides information *you* can use to improve your students' learning. The only requirement is that you assess your course/program's effectiveness each academic year (however you choose to do that) and use the results to make improvements.

Q: I got a memo the other day that said assessment plans had to be documented into the Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database (U-LEAD) by now. I thought the deadline for documenting these was not until June 15. Which is true?

A: It is true that the deadline for documenting *all* of your unit's assessment *activities* into the U-LEAD is June 15. The memo was a reminder that the outcome, criteria, and methodology for this

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Q&A

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academic year (the assessment plan) should be documented into the database by now. Later, by June 15, the unit will document the *results* of the assessment plan and the *improvement actions* it plans to implement. Of course you may wait until June 15 to complete all your documentation, including the assessment plan.

Q: I know I typed my unit's assessment plan for this year into the U-LEAD and hit the submit button. When I went back to add the results, I could not find it. Where did it go? Did someone else delete it? Do I need to re-do all that work, or is there some way I can find it?

A: Not to worry! Contact me. I can find the assessment plan in the database. Only the database administrator or I can delete records from the database. You may have forgotten to select the unit name on the record.

Q: I was trying to document my assessment plans for this year into the U-LEAD, but couldn't submit the new record because my password wouldn't work. How do I "get in?"

A: The user name and password for the U-LEAD is the same for everyone (user name: ACC Units, password: unitgoals); your email password and username won't work.

Q: What do we do if there have been changes in our unit and the assessment plans that are in the database are no longer appropriate or we do not have access to any of the data that were supposed to have been collected?

A: I presume we are talking about assessment plans from a previous year. If so, there's not much you can do. If you have exhausted all possibilities for obtaining the information, I suggest you indicate on the original assessment plan that the assessment was not done and give the reason.

Q: Someone told me that we get professional development credit for documenting our unit's assessment activities into the U-LEAD. Is that true?

A: Not exactly…but you can earn two hours of professional development credit if you complete the assessment workshop that is designed to assist you in creating and documenting unit-level assessment plans. There is one offered for instructional units on the first Friday of every month, one month for instructional units and the next month for non-instructional units. Faculty may sign up through Faculty Development (http://irt.austin.cc.tx.us/registration/); staff need to call me.

FYI: The Unit-Level Effectiveness Assessment Database is being redesigned. Documenting assessment activities should be easier under the new design. New data entry manuals will be distributed before the changeover occurs this spring.

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Richard Fonte, President
Austin Community College

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